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THE TIMES

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ONLY IN THE TIMES

DEATH OF A PRINCESS

IN FULL THE MOST SEARCHING INVESTIGATION YET

TODAY THE CRASH: WAS IT DODI'S FAULT?

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Derwent May on love poetry
The life and work of Cartier-Bresson

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36 PAGES OF JOBS

Graduates 17K
Trainees 18K
Director 50K
PA 23K

2 SECTIONS

Iran and Iraq forge anti-West pact



"You'll love it — we went there seven years ago and had a super time"

By MICHAEL EVANS
DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

SENIOR intelligence and security officials from Iraq and Iran have met secretly to forge a new alliance in the face of the growing American military presence in the Gulf region. In an extraordinary move aimed at ending the rivalry between the two countries for the sake of co-operation against a "common enemy", President Saddam Hussein sent his youngest son, Qusay, to represent him at the clandestine meeting last week.

side of the Iran-Iraq border on February 5, where he met Qorbanali Dorr Najafabadi, the Iranian Intelligence Minister. According to Western intelligence sources, Qusay was accompanied by Rafiq Daham al-Takriti, the head of Iraqi general intelligence. The meeting has provided the most dramatic evidence that the two old enemies are developing new contacts and putting to one side, at least for the moment, a long list of outstanding mutual demands which have remained unresolved since the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s and the 1991 Gulf War.

Confronted by a steadily increasing United States-led coalition against him, Saddam appears to have decided to turn to Tehran for practical support. His moves come as Britain and America firmly rejected his latest offer to open eight presidential palaces to United Nations inspection. President Clinton demanded "full and free access". As the military build-up in the Gulf intensified, the commander of the American forces there, Marine Corps General Anthony Zinni, told reporters "I would say we're within a week or so, of being able to strike Iraq. In Washington, the Pentagon reported that Saddam has several dozen hidden Scud missiles with sufficient range to hit Iraq's neighbours. There is no likelihood of any

joint military response from Iraq and Iran, but both countries have huge intelligence resources and an agreement to pool them in areas of mutual interest adds a new menacing ingredient to the volatile region. The meeting between Saddam's son and the Iranian minister came after a visit to Tehran by Muhammad al-Sahaf, the Iraqi Foreign Minister. In the second half of last month, the result of these meetings is that there is now believed to be a direct channel of communication between the heads of the Iraqi and Iranian intelligence services.

During his visit to Tehran, the Iraqi Foreign Minister is understood to have signed a memorandum of understanding with his Iranian counterpart, Kamal Khatami, which was approved by Muhammad Khatami, the Iranian President, and the supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei. Early last month President Khatami seemed to make modest overtures to Washington when he suggested the possibility of unofficial dialogue with America. He also appeared on American television when he called for greater cultural relations between Iran and America. However, since the latest build-up of tension in the Gulf and the arrival of more American firepower in the region, Iraq has been pressing Tehran to forget past disputes and

to form a common front against the Americans. The intelligence sources said Iraq appeared to have offered a number of concessions to encourage Iran to join Baghdad in developing an anti-American plan of action. The concessions are believed to have included an agreement by Baghdad to reduce its support for Iranian opposition groups operating inside Iraq. In exchange, Tehran has suspended its claim for compensation from Baghdad totalling about \$100 billion (\$161 billion) for the damage caused by the Iran-Iraq war.

Secret Scuds, page 15

Sinn Fein likely to be ejected

By MARTIN FLETCHER
CHIEF IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

THE British and Irish governments confirmed yesterday that Sinn Fein faced expulsion from the peace talks if the police formally link the IRA to this week's murders of two Belfast men.

That link looked increasingly likely after four more men were arrested in West Belfast after Tuesday's killing of Robert Dougan, a prominent loyalist. Security sources indicated that all seven detained men were IRA suspects.

In addition, Bertie Ahern, the Irish Prime Minister, said he had received "tentative" information that Direct Action Against Drugs, an IRA front organisation, murdered Brendan Campbell, a drugs dealer, on Monday night.

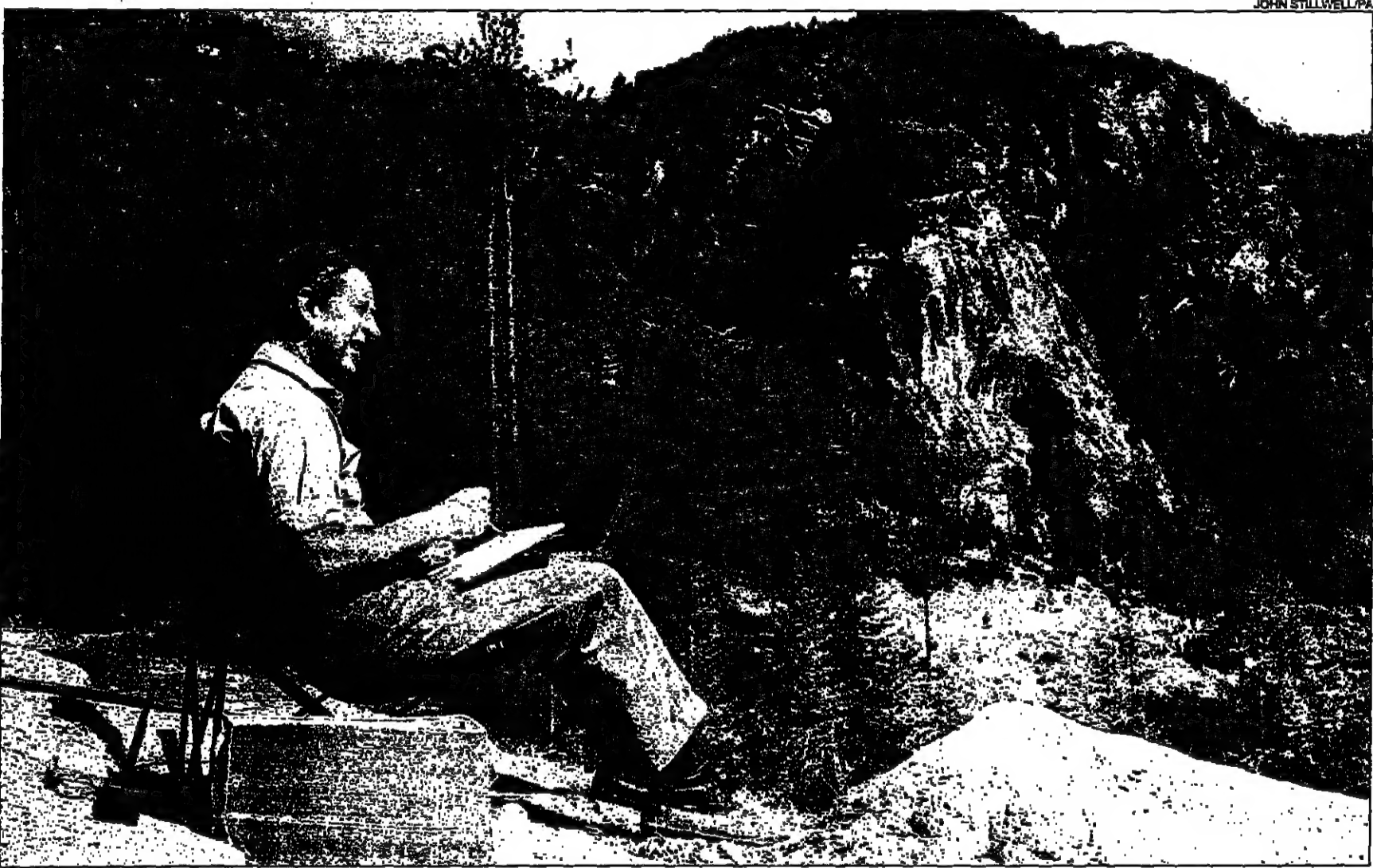
Tony Blair said that "you can't have one set of rules for one group and others for others". Mr Ahern said that the rules had to be enforced "without fear of favour". Last month the Ulster Democratic Party was expelled from the talks after its paramilitary associates killed three Roman Catholics, although in that case the Ulster Freedom Fighters admitted culpability.

In the Commons Mo Mowlam, the Northern Ireland Secretary, also promised to act if necessary, although she said that IRA involvement had not been established. David Trimble, the Ulster Unionist Party leader, said, however, it was inconceivable that Ronnie Flanagan, the RUC Chief Constable, would reach any other conclusion. Andrew Mackay, the shadow Northern Ireland Secretary, said: "I would not be surprised if the IRA were to be ejected from the talks."

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The backdrop of the Tiger's Nest monastery provided the Prince of Wales with a spectacular subject during his painting expedition in Bhutan yesterday

Painter Prince treks to new artistic heights

THE PRINCE OF WALES was rewarded with a breathtaking subject for a watercolour yesterday after climbing 1,500ft to reach one of the most venerated pilgrim sites in the Himalayas.

His two-hour trek took him to a vantage point in the hills of Bhutan overlooking the 17th-century Tiger's Nest monastery.

The artist Prince, while impressed by the view, found his talents somewhat inhibited by the atmosphere. "The trouble is the paint dries too quickly in the sun and the dry air," he said.

The Prince had set a punishing pace trekking up the steep hillside, with a crooked walking stick in his hand and binoculars around his neck.

"It's not so bad if you're used to Scotland," he said.

But this was hardly a solitary pilgrimage: behind the Prince came a sort of St James's Palace in the Himalayas. There was the assistant private secretary — who rode up the rugged hillside on a pack-pony — the diplomats, the royal doctor, the police bodyguards and Bhutan's Environment Minister, plus ten ponies carrying royal paraphernalia including the Prince's paints.

Along the way, the Prince met Bhutanese peasant farmers who scratch a living from the hills.

The peasants collect resin-rich pine cones from the forest to light their fires and use dried pine needles for animal bedding. They keep pigs and feed them on marijuana plants which grow wild in the hills.

A Bhutanese official explained: "The marijuana makes the pigs sleep at night and keeps them quiet."

— Press Association

New Lord's Prayer divides the Church

By RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

TRADITIONALISTS in the Church of England reacted with horror to yesterday's decision by the General Synod to include a modern-language version of the Lord's Prayer alongside a traditional version in its new service book.

In the new version the phrase "And lead us not into temptation", in use since decreed by Henry VIII in 1541, has been substituted by "Save us from the time of trial" and "trespass" has become "sin".

Anthony Kilminster, the chairman of the Prayer Book Society, accused the Church of bowing to political correctness in "mutilating" the nation's liturgical inheritance.

"The modern-language version is entirely unmemorable," he said. "It does not have the same resonance as the traditional Lord's Prayer, which people have known for 450 years. They have it engraved in their minds and in their hearts. They are used to it."

"If I was doing a parachute jump and one of the straps snapped as I was coming down, I would not have time to reach for a book. I would offer

a prayer that was engraved in my brain before I hit the deck. And I would have hoped this would be a prayer that generations had said before me."

The modern-language version was approved for use yesterday in the Church of England's prayer book for the new millennium.

The synod, meeting at Church House, Westminster, resisted calls from traditionalists to maintain just one widely-recognised version of the Lord's Prayer in the service for Holy Communion.

Instead, congregations are to be offered two versions, a "modified traditional" version and a "modern" text, drawn up in 1975 by an international commission and which is already used widely in English-speaking Free and Protestant churches.

The change was being debated because the synod is revising its liturgies and drawing up a new prayer book, which will replace the 1980 Alternative Service Book when its authorisation expires in 2001.

Synod debate, page 6

German faces death by stoning

The top security adviser of Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, has opened contacts with Iran in a last-minute attempt to rescue a Hamburg businessman from being stoned to death for adultery. A Tehran court found Helmut Hofer guilty of having sex with an unmarried woman. Page 16

Snowboarder is stripped of gold

Ross Rebagliati of Canada, was stripped of his snowboarding giant slalom gold medal at the Winter Olympics in Nagano after failing a drugs test but claimed he is the victim of passive marijuana smoking. The Canadian Olympic Association is appealing. Page 44

Pound rises after rate rise warning

The pound rose after the Bank of England surprised the City with a hawkish quarterly Inflation Report which said it was more likely than not that interest rates would have to rise again. The Bank's Monetary Policy Committee split on interest rate policy in January. Page 25

Blair to halt 'back door' privacy law

By PHILIP WEBSTER AND JAMES LANDALE

TONY BLAIR is planning changes to new human rights legislation to prevent its becoming a privacy law restricting the press.

The Prime Minister has taken charge of discussions in the Government on the impact of the Human Rights Bill, which reaches the Commons on Monday.

There are widespread fears in the press that the Bill, which incorporates the European Convention on Human Rights into British law, will result in a backdoor privacy law.

This is because under it the Press Complaints Commission, the newspaper watchdog, would be deemed a public authority. People who felt that it had failed to uphold their right to privacy would be able to go to the courts for redress and a privacy law would result.

There appeared to be increased likelihood last night that the Government will exempt the commission from the provisions of the Bill, so that its decisions cannot be the subject of judicial review.

And in a related move

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Blow to political correctness from Mr Punch

By DAMIAN WHITWORTH

A BLOW was struck against political correctness yesterday after a Punch and Judy book, banned for being too violent, was returned to library shelves.

The book was withdrawn from Wiltshire County Council's libraries last week after a couple complained when their daughter brought it home. But last night the council decided that

it was harmless. "This book stems from our cultural heritage," said councillor Paul Sample, chairman of the Libraries, Heritage, and Arts Subcommittee. "We have to be on our guard against our traditions being damaged by a tide of political correctness which is sweeping in from America. Punch and Judy are alive and well in Wiltshire."

However, his comments met with an angry response from Paul Kerton, 27, who with his wife Tracy, 33, asked for the book to be withdrawn after they saw Mr Punch hanging a policeman and banging a baby's head to get it off to sleep.

"I have never said a word against Punch and Judy — it was just that particular book," said Mr Kerton. The Kertons' six-year-old daughter Evie brought the book home from a school trip to the library at Marlborough. At the time Mrs Kerton said: "I

was very upset. This has wife bashing, child beating, and how to hang a policeman. We complained to the county council because we wanted to protect our children."

Mrs Kerton, from Mildenhall, near Marlborough, Wiltshire, said she only realised what was in the book when Evie asked her to read it.

But the council was unmoved. In a statement it said: "It is a show, a fantasy, and all is well at the end."



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The pose that cost Posh Spice £3,000

Newspaper reports of pop star's engagement put customs officials on her trail, reports **Tim Jones**

CUSTOMS officers took a close interest when they saw newspaper photographs of Victoria Adams, better known as Posh Spice, celebrating her engagement to the football star David Beckham.

In particular, they noticed the £15,000 diamond encrusted ring she gave the Manchester United and England star, and noted her comment that she had bought it during a recent visit to Hollywood.

For they knew that when she passed through their controls at Manchester Airport,

Miss Adams, 23, had not declared the item.

For their vigilance, the customs officials have now received from Miss Adams the £3,000 they say she should have paid in duty. The singer, who is worth an estimated £5 million, was saved from having the ring forfeited by the intervention of her solicitor.

Miss Adams had bought the ring from Van Cleef & Arpels of Rodeo Drive, Hollywood, when she and her group had been in California promoting their film *Spice*

world. Sharon Hanley, for Virgin Records, the Spice Girls' recording company, emphasised that Miss Adams had not been fined. She said: "Victoria temporarily brought the ring to England before sending it back to the States to be refixed."

Although it is actually unclear if there is any tax due on it now, Victoria's representatives have settled with customs officers in advance of any difficulty.

"Discussions took place between them and Victoria's representatives after the engagement was announced in the papers and an agreement reached in the past few days. It is if turns out she doesn't actually owe any money, the £3,000 could be returned."

She thought Posh Spice was aware of what was happening although she had not dealt with the matter directly. "It is all being handled by lawyers and accountants. She is far too busy rehearsing in Dublin for the world tour."

Yesterday an airport source said: "Everyone gets equal treatment under the law. When people bring goods worth more than £136 into Britain they are liable for VAT of up to 17 per cent of the value. There is also an import tax of 2 per cent of the value on goods brought in from the United States."

"Customs didn't know anything about the purchase of the ring until all the publicity about the couple's engagement at the end of the month. But they discovered that she had not declared anything when she came into Manchester."

He said that once failure to declare had been proved, the goods technically became the property of the Crown. But, he said, it was up to the discretion of customs officials whether the person would be prosecuted or fined.

Even after paying a fine, he said, the customs could decide to keep the goods. He added: "In this case she was asked to pay import duty and VAT based on the value of the ring together with a nominal financial penalty instead of having to go to court."

The photos were taken at a Cheshire hotel when the



Victoria Adams and David Beckham show off their rings in the photoshoot that was later to cost her dear

couple announced their engagement to the world on January 25.

The £3,000 will certainly not trouble Miss Adams, nor would it worry Mr Beckham, 22, who is paid £18,000 a week by his club plus fees for endorsements. If he was sold he is likely to fetch more than £10 million, making him one

of the most expensive footballers in the world.

Mr Beckham bought the £40,000 diamond solitaire ring that he gave to Miss Adams in this country from Boodle and Dunthorne in Manchester, which caused no problem with unpaid duty.

The couple plan to marry later this year, probably in

Chelmsford, Essex. It will be the biggest wedding between a pop star and a footballer since Joy Beverley, of the Beverley Sisters, married Billy Wright, the England captain, in 1933.

Last night a Manchester United spokesman said: "David would not wish to comment on his private life."

Beckham himself had rather more prosaic concerns on his mind, a hamstring injury having ruled him out of playing for England against Chile.

Mel Riley, media officer at Manchester Airport said: "It is not our policy to discuss matters relating to private individuals."

Radiation alert over seaside resort's pigeons

By **Russell Jenkins**

HUNDREDS of pigeons roosting in the shadow of the nuclear reprocessing plant in Cumbria are to be culled after some dead birds were found to have detectable levels of radioactivity.

The contamination was discovered last week when an RSPCA inspector was called in to dispose of more than 700 birds nesting around a house in the resort town of Seascale where they were fed and looked after by two sisters.

Neighbours had been shooting the birds with air rifles. When Inspector Darryl Street presented five bin bags, containing 150 dead pigeons, for routine monitoring at Sellafield two miles away, he was alarmed to discover that they were radioactive.

BNFL, which runs the reprocessing plant, carried out an extensive check at the home of sisters, Jane and Barrie Robinson. Monitors recorded detectable levels of contamination in the garden and around the entrance of the house.

The company insisted last night that the local population should not be alarmed. They said the levels of radioactivity are not significantly higher than background levels, officially put at two and half millisieverts a year. However they are taking the precaution of undertaking more a detailed laboratory examination of the carcasses to find out exactly where the contamination is coming from.

John Barbour, BNFL spokesman, said: "It may be something the birds ingested or the other possibility, they are finding a way into the nooks and crannies of the older part of this site and picking up little bits of dust on their feathers and taking it away with them."

"People should not be alarmed. There is no reason to suggest there is any risk to people's health at all."

The RSPCA has reported the incident to the Health and Safety Inspectorate and is warning other animal workers near the plant to wear protective clothing. Inspector Street was found to be clear of any contamination.

Victoria Adams' and David Beckham's rings

Where the stars go for big rocks

FROM GILES WHITTILL IN LOS ANGELES

VAN Cleef and Arpels is a standard stop on any Beverly Hills jewellery shopping trip. For the coachloads of Japanese shoppers who flock to Rodeo Drive, credit cards will do — but those famous enough prefer to borrow.

Geena Davis, Jodie Foster, Whoopi Goldberg and Susan Sarandon have all been known to look in at this time of year, to begin accessorising their Oscar night outfits. A security guard promised yesterday: "We'll see most of the nominees. They come by appointment."

At last year's Oscars, Vivica Fox, a star of *Independence Day*, wore a 14-

carat Van Cleef diamond ring worth \$500,000. Salma Hayek, the star of *Footloose*, borrowed a \$526,000 Van Cleef choker for the 1996 Carousell of Hope Ball.

But lending jewels to whimsical performers can have its risks. In 1991, Madonna borrowed a \$14 million 34-carat pink diamond ring with matching earrings for an Oscar night performance. During the song, one of the earrings fell into her hair and she flung it into the audience. Only later did the underwriters learn that she had substituted a fake pair at the last minute.

Father killed himself over son's obsession

By **EMMA WILKINS**

A TEENAGE boy's obsession with cleanliness drove his father to shoot him before turning the shotgun on himself, an inquest was told yesterday.

Gerald Carter, 50, from Chichester, west Sussex, snapped in December last year after coping with his son's rare mental condition for six years. Philip Carter, 16, who has since made a good recovery from wounds to his back and stomach, suffered from a compulsion to wash his hands constantly and demanded that chairs were wiped before he sat on them.

Mr Carter's widow Christina, said her son's condition had improved when he went to college but worsened over the Christmas holidays. "In September last year he started to go to Chichester college and he was doing really well and we were really pleased with him and he was getting good exam results. The disorder

was still there but it was settling."

"We thought we had started on the right road. He broke up from college and over the Christmas period started getting very anxious and started washing his hands and kept wanting his clothes washed and bed changed and even wanted to wipe the chairs because he thought they were dirty."

"It got a bit anxious and tense but we never really had rows over it and as a family we coped as best we could." Mrs Carter said her husband occasionally became angry with Philip but was never violent. "He did a lot to try to help Philip and he was very supportive towards me," she added.

The inquest heard that on December 28 Mrs Carter went out of the house and left her husband watching television. Mr Carter, a plumber, shot his son twice before calling an

ambulance. He then went into his garden and killed himself with the single-barrelled shotgun.

Gary Edwards, a paramedic who attended the scene, told the inquest: "I found a male youth lying in the hallway with his back up against the wall and I said to him 'What's happened'."

"He said, 'I've been shot in my back and my stomach hurts'. I then noticed there were several spent cartridges and I could smell burning."

"The youth then said, 'My father is out in the garden with a gun'. I went round the driveway to the side of the house to the garden and saw a male lying on the ground and I was sure that he was dead."

"It was then important to treat the youth and I said to him, 'Did you and your Dad have a row?' and he replied, 'Yes, my Dad shot me'."

The coroner, Roger Stone, recorded a verdict of suicide.

Twins write advert for new mum

By **A CORRESPONDENT**

TWIN girls aged 10 have written an advertisement for someone to care for them after their mother's death. "Kids and dog for hire. Life-term contract," says the advert by Lauren and Ashton, Mills, whose mother has cancer.

Ms Mills, 43, a single mother, backed the girls' appeal, which included the stipulation: "Sad girls need not apply." Ms Mills, from Blackbird Leys, Oxford, said: "We are a very upfront family who face up to things and talk about everything together."

"They are good kids and I want to find the right person or couple to take them on. I don't want the 'puppy syndrome' where someone feels sorry for them and takes them without thinking it through."

The advertisement was placed by Oxfordshire County Council. Gill Evans, a family placement officer, said: "The wording is how the children wanted it."

Girls in pearls, with attitude

By **CAROL MIDDLEY**
MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

DRESSED from head to toe in biker's leathers and sitting astride a Honda CBR600, Chloe Courtauld is about to shake up the traditional image of the county set.

She has been chosen to bring a younger, more go-getting image to the latest issue of *Country Life* in a move that will ruffle the feathers of more conventional readers.

The only concession to the magazine's traditional "girls in pearls" look is the diamond necklace she wears beneath the collar of her black leather jacket. In real life she rides a modest Pinnipio Glicra scooter but hopes to own a Ducati.

Miss Courtauld's pose was designed as a "blast of fresh air" to blow away the dusty image of county living in an issue devoted to young England, the magazine said yesterday. She is not a



Chloe Courtauld astride the Honda and a more traditional cover girl pose for *Country Life* in 1897



professional model but a member of staff at an exclusive London jewellers, and is the daughter of Richard Courtauld, of the textiles family. "It is something which is a bit more fun and eye-catching for *Country Life*," said Miss Courtauld, 25, who claimed to be a devoted reader of the

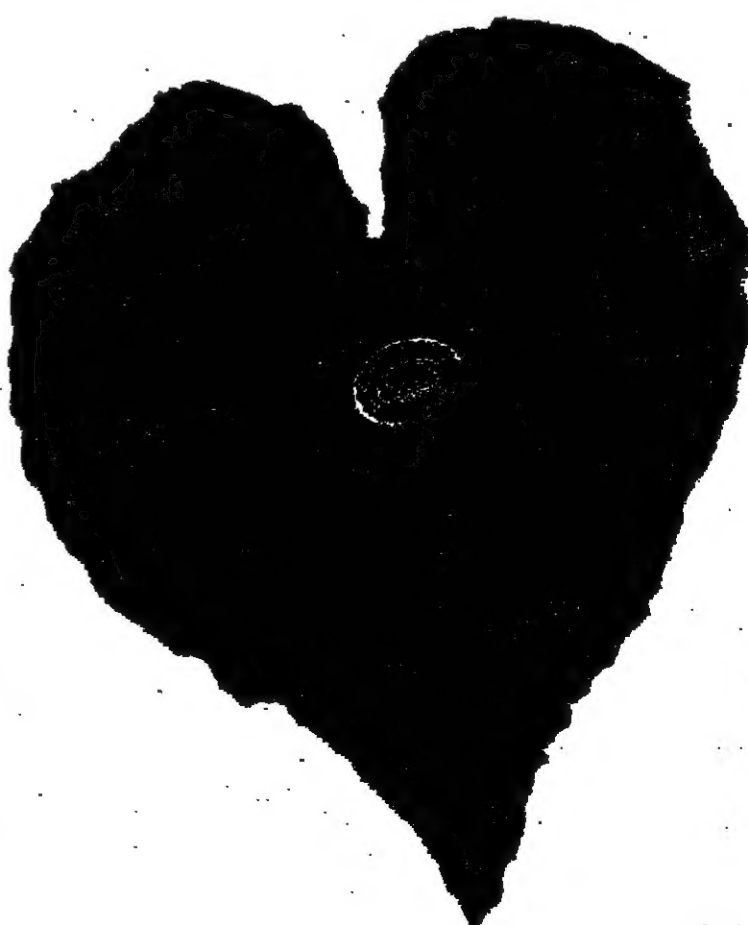
magazine. She said of the pose: "I like to think of it as 'sparks and diamonds' because the feature is normally known as 'girls and pearls'. It is still unusual for a girl to be motorbiking and it would be nice to see a lot more of them doing it."

Melanie Cable-Alexander,

features editor of *Country Life*, said it would have been inappropriate to have a picture of a woman in a floral print dress on the cover because the issue was about youth. She said: "Chloe was perfect. She is a girl from our world but also a bit more modern and a blast of fresh air. She is also very, very beautiful. We are thrilled with the picture. It was taken by a young photographer and he was given a free rein to do something slightly more groovy about the spirit of youth."

Asked if the picture risked alienating *Country Life*'s more elderly readers she added: "Not at all. It is good occasionally to surprise your readers and keep them on their toes."

Last year *Country Life* celebrated its centenary with another iconic photograph. It featured a woman naked except for a string of pearls draped around her waist.



FEBRUARY 14th. SPOIL SOMEONE YOU LOVE.

552 من الأصل

Boy, 10, takes centre stage to save theatre

By Helen Johnstone

SUSANNAH YORK and a 10-year-old boy took leading roles in the latest act of a drama about the future of a theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon yesterday.

The actress, aged 56, gave an impassioned performance at a public inquiry into the Waterside Theatre, which the brewery giant J.D. Wetherspoon hopes to turn into a restaurant and bar. The friends of the theatre and Stratford-upon-Avon District Council are fighting the plan and Miss York likened the struggle to a similar battle by its famous neighbour, the Royal Shakespeare Theatre.

"Let's remember that the present Royal Shakespeare Theatre was only built and completed in 1932 because the then council, supported by Stratford citizens, so determinedly fought (against) a huge national campaign to have the theatre built in London," she said.

The actress spoke from a prepared text but that was not because she could not remember her lines. She explained that she could not trust herself not to get too excited.

Her four-minute address brought warm applause from most people present but a rebuke from the government inspector, Gyllian Grindley, who said it was not appropriate to clap at a public inquiry.

Miss York, who has given many acclaimed performances at the RST, said the idea that the Waterside theatre could be lost would appeal all



The theatre that a brewer wants to turn into a bar

lovers of theatre, Shakespeare and Stratford itself. The 120-seat theatre closed last year but Miss York, who drove from London to register her support, said ambitious plans for its future were widely welcomed by the local community. A Midlands company has offered to buy the freehold and offer it to the theatre company at a peppercorn rent.

She added: "Once a theatre has gone no matter how large or how small, it is another

brick removed from the foundation of our culture."

Timmy James, 10, whose eloquent appeal to the council last year is credited with securing its support, spoke on behalf of young people. "Theatres are highly valuable places and we do not wish to see them abolished. I have no objection to pubs but what I do object to is closing a theatre to build one."

The youngster, who belongs to the God's Own theatre group in Kenilworth, Warwickshire, added: "If I have children I think they deserve the same chance to enjoy plays at the Waterside Theatre that I have had."

The modern, brick-built theatre, which faces the RST directly across the river, has six public houses within view. The council refused the change of use on the grounds of a loss of cultural heritage.

Timothy Martin, chairman and chief executive of J.D. Wetherspoon, said his plan would add vitality to the town and bring significant investment. The inquiry is expected to last three days.



In rehearsal: Susannah York and Timmy James go over reasons to save the theatre

New tests devised to restore faith in smear test

By Ian Murray
MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

A LABORATORY accreditation process designed to make mistakes in cervical smear tests a thing of the past was launched yesterday.

It sets 48 different standards covering training, workload and quality control and requires everyone in a laboratory from the consultant to the technicians to pass two proficiency tests a year.

Designed by Health Services Accreditation, which was set up by the National Health Service to develop standards, the new process is meant to reassure the public that smear tests are reliable following a number of well-publicised failures by the screening service.

"Smear tests are one of the real success stories of the NHS and have saved more lives than seatbelts in the decade since the screening service was set up," Andrew Corbett-Nolan, director of the service, said at its launch. "The trouble is that a few terrible failures have tarnished its image. Public faith in its reliability needs restoring."

Last December the Government announced that in future all laboratories doing smear tests would have to be accredited. The laboratory at Kent and Canterbury Hospital, which failed to spot abnormalities in the smears of eight women who later died of cancer, was not accredited and no longer carries out tests.

About two thirds of the 180 laboratories doing the tests are accredited by Clinical Pathology UK Ltd, a company set up by the Royal College of Pathologists. Their accreditation covers all the work of a hospital laboratory and requires 40 standards to be met.

Mark Bower, the consultant histopathologist who developed the new accreditation process, said the difference between the two schemes was that laboratories using the new one would be able to work towards obtaining published standards rather than rely on passing an inspection.

Laboratories wishing to be accredited have 15 months to meet the 48 standards. Once accredited they will have to reapply every two years to ensure they maintain the necessary levels.

Julietta Patrick, national co-ordinator of the NHS cervical screening programme, said the present system was working well with deaths from cervical cancer falling by 7 per cent a year. The existing monitoring system had shown its worth and the new one would need to prove itself before she could confidently recommend laboratories seek accreditation from it.

Half of all village food shops have shut

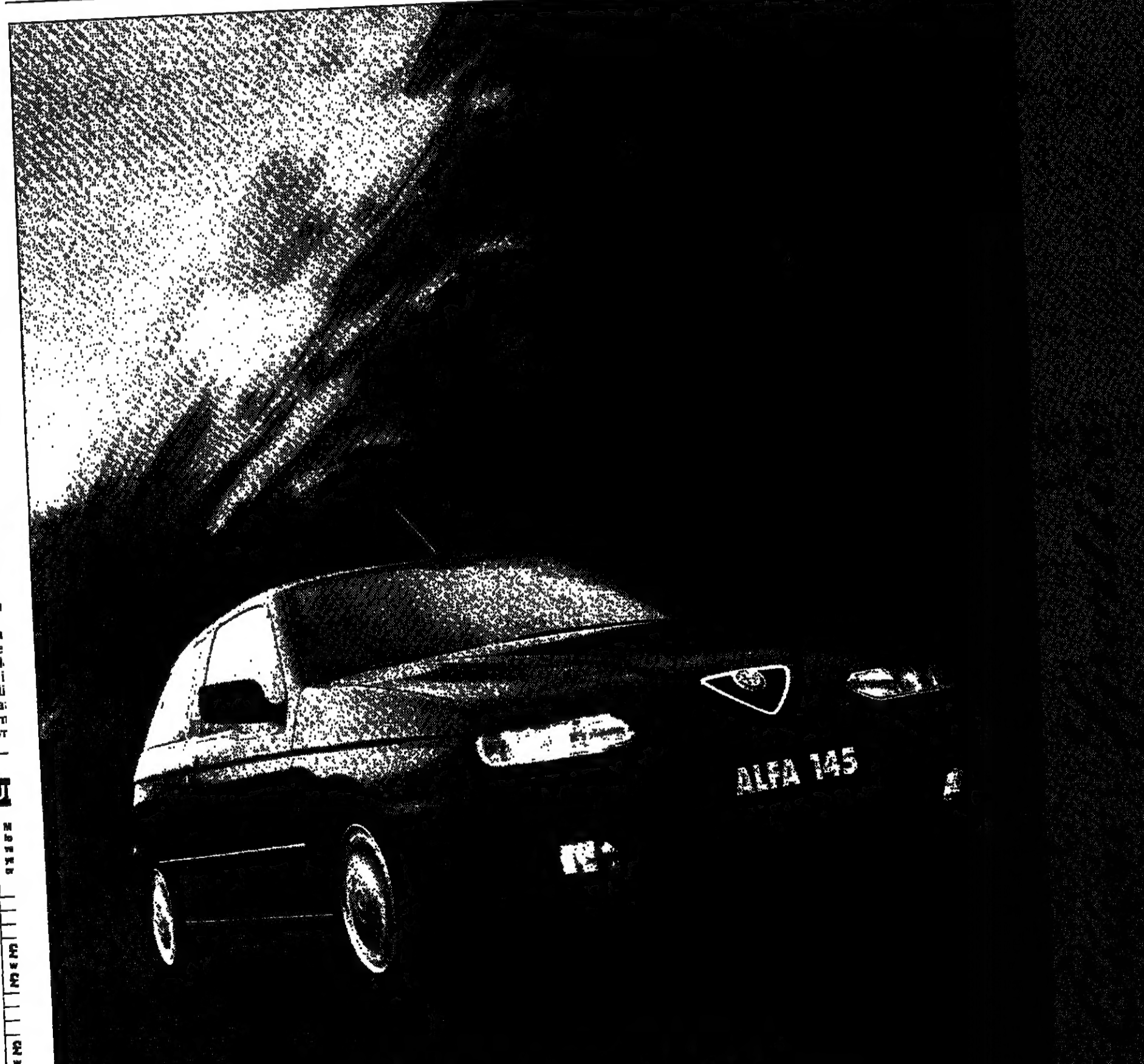
By Michael Hornsey

NEARLY half the butchers, greengrocers and other food-only shops in England's villages and market towns have closed over the past six years, according to a report published yesterday.

The 9,000 shops counted in 1991 had dwindled to just under 5,000 by last year, the Rural Development Commission discovered in its third national survey of rural services.

It was the biggest single loss found by the commission, which also recorded an increase in the proportion of communities without a public station, daily bus service or milk delivery. The survey covered 9,677 rural parishes, defined as those with populations of up to 10,000.

The survey found that 29 per cent of parishes had no pub, 43 per cent no post office, 49 per cent no school, 70 per cent no general store, 75 per cent no daily bus service, 82 per cent no food-only shop, 91 per cent no day care for the elderly or bank or building society, 92 per cent no police station, 93 per cent no public nursery and 99 per cent no job centre or benefit agency office.



THERE IS A DIVIDING LINE BETWEEN 1.6 3 DOOR HATCHBACKS. THIS IS IT.

The Alfa 145 Twin Spark. A 3 door hatchback whose power and efficiency comes courtesy of its new and unique 16V Twin Spark engine.

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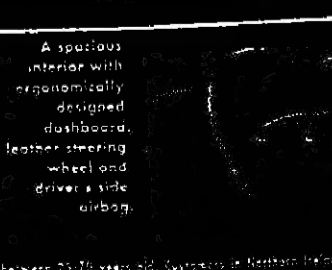
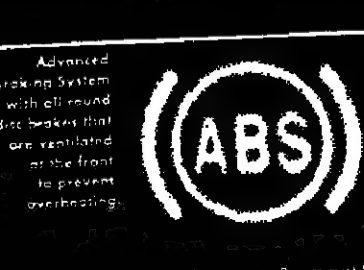
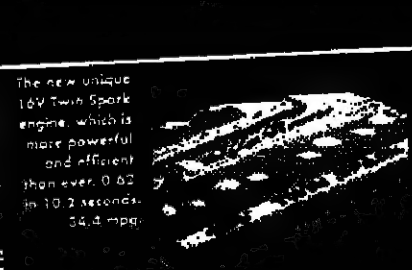
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Acclaim for children who defy the odds

The courage and character of 150 youngsters are saluted, writes Kathryn Knight

COURAGEOUS children, many who have overcome life-threatening illnesses and disabilities, were yesterday rewarded for their bravery.

The 16th annual Child Of Achievement Awards honoured 150 children at a lunch attended by John Major, the television presenter Gaby Roslin, actresses Jane Horrocks and June Whitfield and other celebrities.

Many of the children chosen from 9,000 entries were fundraisers for charity despite their own difficulties. Among them was Leanne Hammore, 8, of Polegate, East Sussex, who looks after her Down's syndrome brother and raises money by selling her own watercolour paintings and making pots.

Her parents Carla and Nick said she had also had to cope with the deaths of another brother and sister, and spends much of her time looking after her three-year-old brother Craig. Leanne said: "I like helping people who have learning difficulties so they can do more."

Lucy Freeman, 9, from Leyland, Lancashire, was

born with only one normal limb, but after being fitted with an artificial arm when she was 18 months she decided she preferred life without it and discarded it.

She wears an artificial leg but is a keen swimmer and also a member of her local Brownie pack. Her head teacher nominated her because of her cheerfulness, despite numerous hospital visits.

Her mother Alison said: "She doesn't allow herself to get depressed even when things are really hard. She is a very sweet-natured girl."

Jamie Rigby, 11, has dedicated himself to fund-raising for the disadvantaged. While his classmates play

football and computer games he organises sponsored events.

His charity work started when he read an article in his local paper in Lancashire about a boy with eye cancer who needed to raise money for a false eye. "I just felt I had to help, so I spent my Easter holidays going round companies and pubs asking them to sponsor me for a sponsored swim. I raised £700. I like doing things for other people," he said.

Children from the Sugar Hill Sign Sing Choir in Co Durham have raised £3,000 for the deaf. The children, who attend a normal school, give up breaks to practice signing lyrics while music is played.

After presenting the medals and trophies, Mr Major, a patron of the awards, praised the courage of the children.

"Anyone who has ever met these children knows the enormous hardships they endure and the huge courage they show. I defy anyone to sit through this ceremony without a tear in their eye."

Supergrass who bragged is shot in his 'safe house'

By ADAM FRESCO AND STEWART TENDLER

A CAR dealer shot dead in an apparent contract killing was a police informer who had been living under a false identity since helping to convict a drugs gang nine years ago.

James Lawson, 40, was murdered as he sat in his rented home in Hook, Hampshire, on Tuesday evening. It is believed that he had been moved to the area for his own safety after giving evidence against drug dealers at an Old Bailey trial in 1988.

Residents of Hook said last night that he may have brought about his own death by bragging about his exploits as an informer and revealing his true identity as Peter McNeil.

Nine years ago McNeil was a key informant in a Scotland Yard investigation which broke a cocaine ring involving an American branch of the Mafia and Colombian drug cartels. IRA terrorists were also suspected of taking part

Neighbours of Lawson, who had convictions for assault, criminal damage, attempted burglary and driving offences, said that he had not tried to avoid attention. He kept an array of cars outside his home, including a Rolls-Royce, Mercedes and BMWs, and was known in the local pub as a braggart.

One acquaintance said: "He just couldn't keep his mouth shut. About five months after I met him he told me he had 'grassed' some people up and he had got immunity from prosecution."

"He always had a bodyguard, which he paid for. They were usually ex-boxers, not professional security. He was under a lot of stress because he knew he had put some major players away."

Lawson often boasted to friends that he was involved in supplying doormen to clubs and pubs in the Midlands. He said he was into "some heavy stuff," another acquaintance said.

"He always had a big roll of money on him and liked to let everyone know about it. He used to use his mobile phone in the pub and shout about having £20,000 in his pocket."

It was reported that Lawson, who sold secondhand cars, had another person in the house with him when he was shot at close-range several times on Tuesday evening by a man with a handgun.

Jez Oliver, a former neighbour, said: "He was a wheeler-dealer but a very nice guy. I don't know if he was involved in drugs but he had a lot of heavy contacts who used to visit him and he knew a lot of people."

"He was a Jack-the-lad and liked to have a laugh. I saw him just a couple of days ago on his motorbike and he waved hello."

Richard Palmer, who, with his brother James, owns the local cab company used by the victim and his associates, said: "I knew him a couple of years ago when he first moved here and his real name was McNeil. His background came out in bits and pieces. He would tell you a little bit one day and then some more a few months later."

"I have never known him to answer the door on his own. He always got someone to answer the door for him and found out who it was before he would open up. I could not believe it when the police told me he had been shot because I couldn't understand how the killer had got in."

James Palmer said that he had driven some "pretty unsavoury-looking guys" from Lawson's home to Harrow, Windsor and London.

Another secondhand car dealer, Phil Gurns, said: "I bought a car a week from him. I knew Lawson was not his real name. The name on his chequebook was not Lawson. He always had another guy with him."

The New York Times

NEW YORK, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1998

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Lord's Prayer agreed without temptation

General Synod approves version for millennium, writes Ruth Gledhill

A MODERN version of the Lord's Prayer without reference to "temptation" was approved yesterday for use in the Church of England's prayer book for the millennium.

The General Synod, meeting at Church House, Westminster, resisted calls from traditionalists to maintain just one, widely-recognised version of the Lord's Prayer in the service for Holy Communion. Instead, congregations are to be offered two versions, one a "modified traditional" version and the other a "modern" text drawn up in 1975 by an international commission which is already used widely in English-speaking Free and Protestant churches.

The change was being debated because the synod is revising its liturgies and drawing up a new prayer book to replace the 1980 Alternative Service Book when its authorisation expires in 2001. The two versions will be printed side-by-side in the new prayer book, Common Worship. The modern language version may be subject to further change when the liturgy goes through further revisions in July.

In the new Lord's Prayer, the line "And lead us not into temptation", in use since decreed by Henry VIII in 1541, has been deleted in favour of: "Save us from the time of trial." The word "trespass" has become "sin" and "Thy" when referring to God has become "Your".

The synod agreed the change in spite of protests from the official representative of the eastern Orthodox churches, Archimandrite Ephrem Lash, who said the

MODERN LANGUAGE VERSION

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.

TRADITIONAL VERSION

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be Thy name;
Thy kingdom come;
Thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.
For Thine is the kingdom,
the power and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.

children of Orthodox Christians living in Britain would be affected by the change because they often attended Anglican state schools. He said that Orthodox theologians, who understood the prayer in its original Greek better than most, opposed the substitution "Save us from the time of trial" in the modern version because it was a less accurate translation.

The Right Rev Gavin Reid, Bishop of Maidstone, described the results of a recent Gallup poll commis-

sioned by the church's millennium team to investigate use of the Lord's Prayer in Britain. Eight out of ten said they could recite the Lord's Prayer, except the youngest age group, 16-25, where the figure fell to five out of ten. They were all referring to the traditional version. About half those questioned had learned the prayer at school.

One argument of the traditionalists is that while most people know the traditional version and can recite it by heart, a proliferation of mod-

ern-language versions confuses people and results in mumbling and incoherence at public events.

The Bishop of Norwich, the Right Rev Peter Nott, who argued unsuccessfully for an amendment which would have reduced the number of Lord's Prayers in the new liturgy to one, traditional, version, said: "There are no less than four versions of the Lord's Prayer in use in English which is both confusing and divisive. Ours is the only language in which that is true."

"Go to France, Spain, Germany, Italy, Japan or Russia and you will find one version of the Lord's Prayer, words of prayer which unite people of all denominations and generations."

He said choice in matters of liturgy was not necessarily a good thing, any more than it was in matters of morals. "We are in grave danger of losing the whole concept of common prayer." The Lord's Prayer was one of the few pieces of Christian culture that remained, he said. "We have almost destroyed the residue of common prayer in our church and in our society."

The confusion was illustrated during the debate itself, when the Right Rev David Standcliffe, Bishop of Salisbury and chairman of the liturgical commission, argued in favour of including a modern-language version in the new prayer book. Even in his own speech, he was inconsistent, referring at one point to the line in question as "Do not bring us to the time of trial" and a few sentences later referring to it as "Save us from the time of trial".

But the synod was swayed



Bishops at the synod, which agreed to recognise two versions of the Lord's Prayer

by strong speeches in favour of including two versions in the new prayer book, to be called *Common Worship*. The Dean of Wells, the Very Rev Richard Lewis, said: "If synod is to give acceptable leadership, it must have a modern version of the Lord's Prayer. For tens of thousands of little boys and girls, men and women, some

now over 30 years old, the modern language version of the Lord's Prayer is the Lord's Prayer." Later, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr George Carey, in his presidential address to the synod, said the church did not adopt modernity for the sake of it.

Dr Carey issued a plea to

the homosexual lobby not to hijack the ten-yearly Lambeth Conference when it meets at Canterbury in July. He wants the meeting of the heads of the 70-million strong worldwide Anglican communion to concentrate on international debt, which he likened to the issue of the slave trade, 200 years ago.

It's now an even funnier old world

By DAMIAN WHITWORTH

THE world is getting weirder. Increased sightings of the Loch Ness Monster, a boom in tulips and a rise in the number of objects falling from the sky made last year significantly stranger than the year before, according to a report released yesterday.

Close monitoring of curious happenings around the world concluded 1997 was 4 per cent weirder than 1996. *Fortean Times*, the journal of strange phenomena which conducted the study, believes the increase is linked to Pre-Millennial Tension, or PMT.

The Weirder Index is compiled annually by comparing the number of reports of strange phenomena with the previous year's figures. The most dramatic increase in unusual behaviour occurred among humans, where weirdness was said to be up by ten per cent. The mass suicide of the Heaven's Gate cult members and the activities of the Aum Shinrikyo cult were central to this boost along with the weller of conspiracy theories about the death of Diana, Princess of Wales. There was also widespread panic in West Africa over stories of penis-stealing magicians.

In the paranormal world the 50th anniversary of the term "flying saucer" was accompanied by a leap in UFO activity.

Attacks by animals and appearances by alien big cats remained steady, but a rise in sightings of the Loch Ness Monster increased animal weirdness by one per cent overall.

Joe McNally, associate editor of *Fortean Times*, said: "Last year was by far the weirdest year since our records began. Although I don't make prophecies, I wouldn't be surprised if the index didn't continue upwards as a result of Pre-Millennial Tension. There seems to be a lot of it about."

Church slims bureaucracy to increase wealth and efficiency

By RUTH GLEDHILL
RELIGION CORRESPONDENT

THE most far-reaching reform of the Church's structure this century was approved by the General Synod yesterday in an attempt to cut costs and bureaucracy.

The number of church commissioners, who manage the Church of

England's finances, is to be cut by two thirds and some central committees of the synod are to be abolished. The Archbishops of Canterbury and York will be joint chairmen of a new Archbishops' Council, which will have policy-making and budgetary powers.

The reforms were proposed in a report by the Right Rev Michael

Turnbull, Bishop of Durham, in the wake of £800 million losses by the Church Commission during the 1980s. The aim is to give the church a more powerful voice and to streamline its decision-making process.

Alan McIntock, chairman of the Church's central board of finance, said: "There is nothing theologically

unsound in striving for a sensible efficiency." He said most people in the Church shared the view that something needed to be done, and fears that the Archbishops' Council would resemble a papal curia were unfounded. "We shall emerge with a thoroughly Anglican and totally unpopal formula, but one which, let us hope, will be a little more

effective in carrying forward God's mission than our fragmented bodies have sometimes been in the past," Mr McIntock said.

Bishop Turnbull, architect of the reforms, said: "We have become atrophied in the way we do things and leadership to God's church."

There was criticism, however, from Gerald O'Brien, of Sevenoaks,

a lay representative for the Rochester diocese. "No other report has received this degree of hype during my time in the synod," he said.

The concept is fundamentally flawed, he said, and proposals to cut the number of bishops and to make the church a private limited company but, sociologically at least, a voluntary society.

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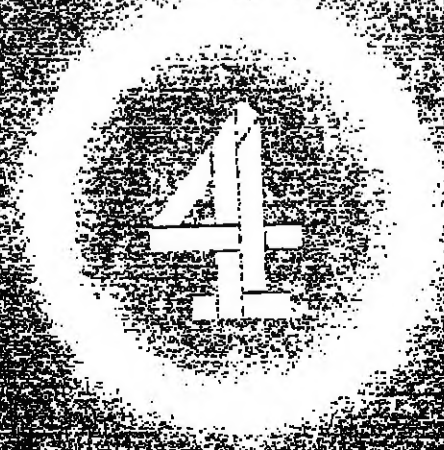
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Many thousands suffer from RSI, say researchers

HUNDREDS of thousands of office workers are likely to be suffering from repetitive strain injury (RSI), according to the first scientific research to show that it is a genuine medical condition caused by working on keyboards. The finding could help many of them to win compensation, the Trades Union Congress has said.

The researchers, from the physiology department of University College London, found that office workers not suffering from the condition have an identical lack of sensitivity in their fingertips to patients who suffered so severely from RSI that they were unable to work. The problem, they discovered, was not strain on muscles or joints but on the nervous system.

Bruce Lynn, the physiologist involved in the research, said he had been surprised to discover that "a very large number of people get pain associated with keyboarding or mouse use".

The research, published today in the *International Archives of Occupational and Environmental Health*, involved carrying out three tests on 17 patients, 29 office staff and 27 people who did not normally work with keyboards. In tests using a machine that vibrated at different levels, the patients and office staff did not notice the vibrations until they were twice as high as levels spotted by those who did not use a keyboard.

The subjects then worked on a keyboard for five minutes before being tested again. The threshold at which the patients felt the vibrations increased even further, while it stayed the same for the office workers and non-keyboard users. Finally a strong vibration was applied to the forearm. The patients reacted strongly whereas the two other categories were unaffected.

■ Office workers who have suffered from using keyboards may have their case for compensation bolstered by evidence that their injury is genuine. Ian Murray reports

chives of Occupational and Environmental Health, involved carrying out three tests on 17 patients, 29 office staff and 27 people who did not normally work with keyboards. In tests using a machine that vibrated at different levels, the patients and office staff did not notice the vibrations until they were twice as high as levels spotted by those who did not use a keyboard.

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"These results show that office workers who are keyboarding for a large part of their working lives are all at risk," Dr Lynn said yesterday. The Banking Insurance and Finance Union, which is awaiting the outcome of five test cases involving Midland Bank workers suffering from RSI, said the condition should become a recognised industrial injury so that sufferers would automatically qualify for disablement benefits. "This research will help to prove that the symptoms aren't psychosomatic," Jacqui O'Neill, the union's research officer, said.

Jane Greening, the physiotherapist involved in the research, said: "If people take a five-minute break every 30 minutes then they are much less likely to get the condition. If anyone feels pain in their arms they should seek help immediately."

Both the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy and the Repetitive Strain Injury Association are setting up helplines: the society on 0171-306 6633 and the association on 01895 431134.

However an expert on industrial hand injuries said last night that the tests had failed to provide any real definition of RSI. "Ten per cent of the population complain of aches and pains in any one year, but that doesn't mean they have a disease."

In 1993 Judge John Prosser, QC, rejected claims by Rafiq Mughal, a Reuters journalist, that he was suffering from RSI. After hearing expert medical evidence he said RSI had "no place in the medical books".

Subsequent judgments involving BT staff and workers for Bernard Matthews, the turkey producers, have accepted that RSI exists and damages have been awarded in a number of cases.

Dentist offers drill to conquer phobia

BY IAN MURRAY, MEDICAL CORRESPONDENT

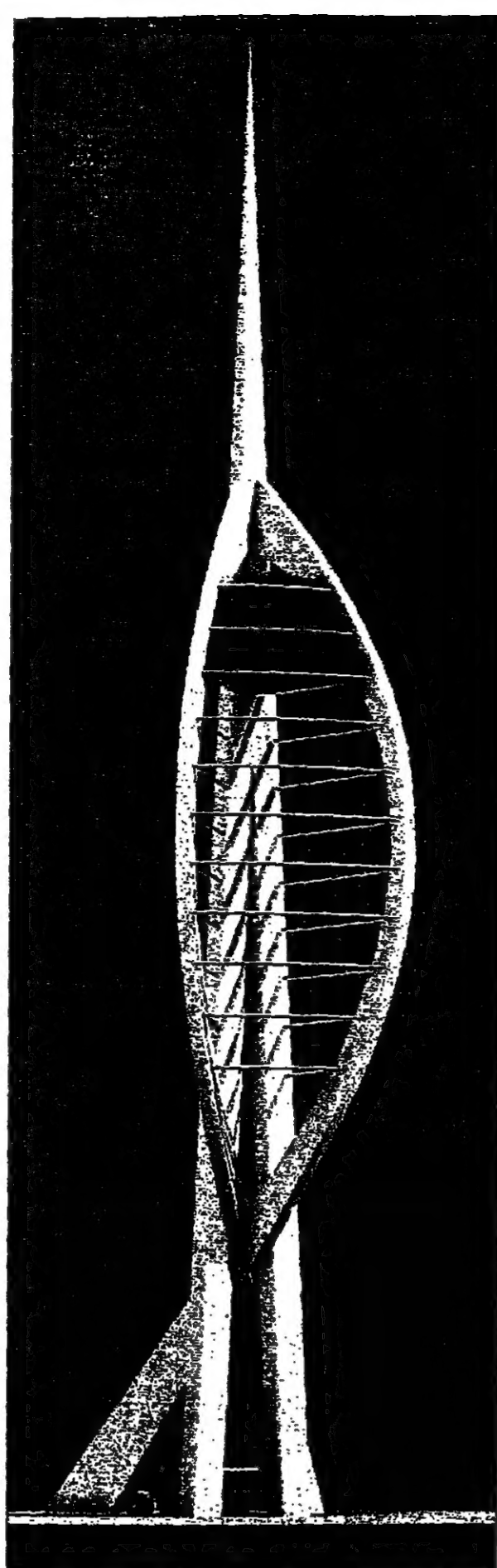
FEAR of the dentist's drill, which can make a 16 stone, oft-rugby player burst into tears, is at least as real as claustrophobia — and people have much more reason to be frightened, a dentist has told his colleagues.

Sufferers can be spotted in the waiting room. Denis Pepper writes in *GDP*, the journal of the General Dental Practitioners' Association. His way of identifying and dealing with it is to call patients in while standing at his surgery door. Those who are apprehensive "do not travel in a totally straight line as they walk the five or so paces through the hallway towards me; they squirm their way along whereas the confident

patient, unless drunk, marches directly".

Mr Pepper, who has a practice in Folkestone, says he establishes a bond to ask apprehensive patients: "What can I do for you?" The simple question can unleash a torrent of information, or in the case of the rugby player, a torrent of tears. Mr Pepper tells them he has seen hundreds of people cry in this way. "This is nothing to be ashamed of."

"Over the years I have seen such few words bring visible relief to the patient. They suddenly sit back and relax a notch as they consider the fact that they are not stupid, they are not being cowardly, they are not idiot. They have a phobia."



The Spinnaker is inspired by sails of racing yachts

Sail motif puts wind up tower objectors

By MARCUS BINNEY

GERMAN designs for a £23 million, 480ft high Millennium Tower soaring over Portsmouth Harbour have come under fierce criticism. Rather than hold an open competition, Portsmouth City Council and the developers Berkeley Homes have commissioned three alternative designs from a firm of German engineers, Lehnhardt Andra and Partners of Stuttgart. Although the project has been in the pipeline for over two years, Portsmouth City Council has refused calls for an architectural competition, saying that could lead to an impractical or uneconomic design.

The tower, scheduled for completion in 2000, is to be built on the waters' edge of the historic Gun Wharf site, which is being developed at a cost of £100 million by Berkeley Homes.

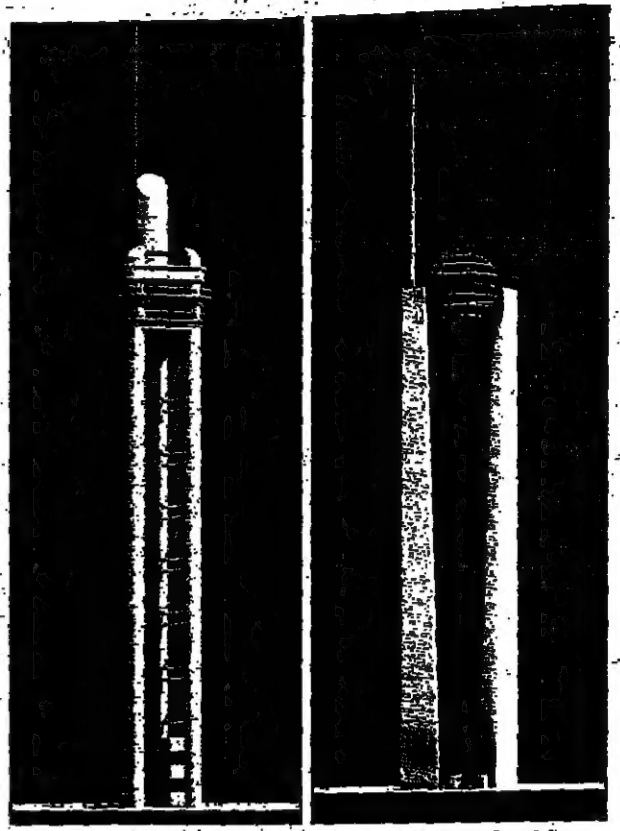
A spokesman for Berkeley Homes said: "The cost of the tower will be £23 million with £9 million coming from the Millennium Commission via the Lottery and the remainder being found by ourselves."

The design for the soaring tower responds to a call by Virginia Bottomley, when Heritage Secretary in the last government, for a strongly "plastic" design.

The German engineering company's three designs have been dubbed the Spinnaker, the Globe and the Triple Tower. The Spinnaker, inspired by the sails of racing yachts, is likely to prove the most popular with the public.

Peter Warlow of HGP Architects, who are working with the German engineers, said: "The tower will be far and away the largest landmark of the south coast of England. From the viewing platform, on a good day, visitors will see 22 miles, across to the Isle of Wight, to the spire of Winchester cathedral and beyond to the east, and to the west to the New Forest."

He added: "The top of the antenna, which is still higher than the viewing platform, will be visible from 27 miles out to sea, lit up at night, and



The Triple Tower, left, recalls the bridge of a ship; the Globe reflects Portsmouth's history as a gateway to the world and, below, the harbour site

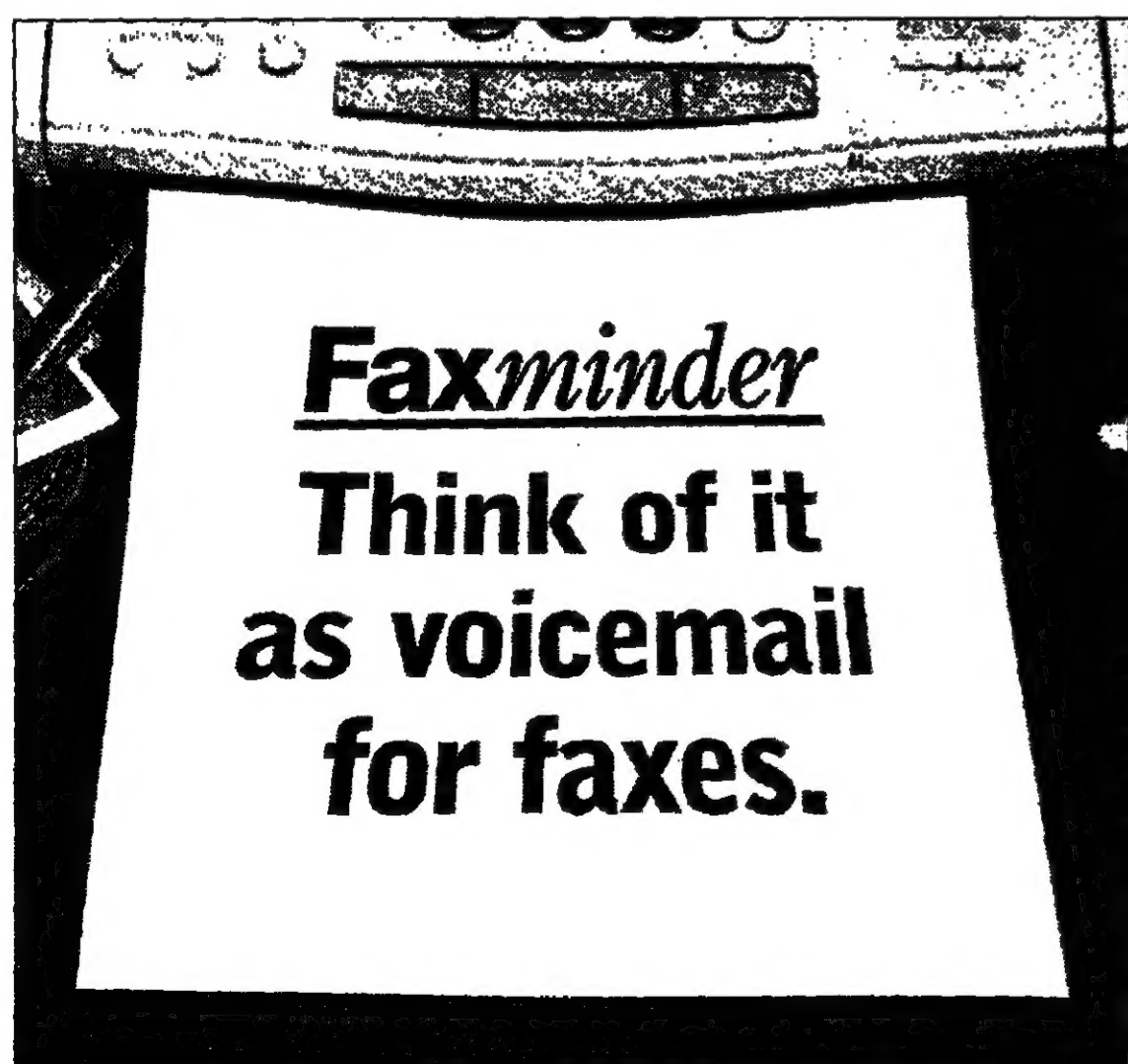


become a familiar sight to everyone using the Isle of Wight ferry."

Celia Clark, chairman of the Portsmouth Society, commented: "Only the spinnaker design has the beginnings of being acceptable. The public are being asked to vote on designs but the ballot paper only offers the opportunity to say yes, not to object to the whole idea of a tower or to request an alternative design by other architects."

The tower is designed as a viewing platform, accommodating up to 300 people at a time, at a cost of about £5 per visit.

Although the tower is controversial it is strongly supported by the city council and likely to receive planning permission. The council forecasts the Gun Wharf development, with the tower as its focus, will attract an extra 1.5 million visitors to Portsmouth each year, greatly benefiting historic ships and other attractions at the dockyard.



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هكذا من الاول

Wedded bliss and the trouble with marriage

Philip Delves Bronington on not-so-happy families

YOUNG couples with young children are the most argumentative couples of all. And when they do argue, it is more likely to be over arguments about leaving the car in the driveway than over problems with sex life.

Money is the greatest cause of argument between British couples, followed by personal habits, children, housework, sex, parents and friends. This is the findings of a survey of 1,000 couples, whose household income is £10,000 or less. It is twice as likely to argue about money as those with household incomes of £20,000 or more.

The most common form of argument is a blazing row, followed by a total lack of communication, as opposed to constant bickering and exchanges of accusations which are slightly less common.

Relate, the counselling service for couples, has conducted a survey of how British couples argue to coincide with the launch of their book, *Stop Arguing Start Talking*, a ten-point plan for couples in conflict, concocted by the agency's Susan Quilliam.

The survey, in which 85 per cent of the respondents were women, found that all couples saw rows as a regular part of their lives together. Changes to the traditional roles of men and women have thrown up new reasons for rows, many of which are made more difficult by the fact that older relatives and parents, who can act as advisers in other situations, are either unsympathetic towards or inexperienced in the new problems.

Half of all arguments between couples take place in the evenings and a quarter of those surveyed admitted to arguing in the stressful moments leading up to a special occasion.

One of the more peculiar findings was that couples in

TO LOVE, HONOUR AND ARGUE

Scotland and the North of England are twice as likely to argue over matters of personal hygiene than those in other areas. That must be the Rab C. Nesbitt factor.

Housework is another common source of strife. Two thirds of women say their menfolk do not pitch in as much as they should.

Higher incomes seem to generate a more mature attitude to arguments between couples. Those with more money seem more able to see arguments as potentially positive junctions in a relationship, clearing the air and establishing ground rules. Those with lower incomes are more likely to see arguments as a surefire means to make a bad situation worse and create a downward spiral of tension and problems.

Whatever your gripe, Ms Quilliam argues, "the way a couple handles its arguments is the single most important key indicator of whether their relationship will succeed or not".

THE TEN-POINT PLAN FOR PEACE

1. Decide to change what you're doing (Stop arguing)
2. Find out why you are arguing (The dirty sock left on the floor)
3. Analyse how you are arguing (Angrily, dispassionately, threateningly, bludgingly)
4. Make your emotions work for you (Kick the dog)
5. Re-understand your partner (OK, you are a neat freak)
6. Learn to drive the argument process (What about your snoring?)
7. Start communicating (Don't go into a bath)
8. Resolve the issue (Remove sock)
9. Trouble-proof the future (Promise to use the laundry basket)
10. Act on what you have discovered or learnt (Use the laundry basket)

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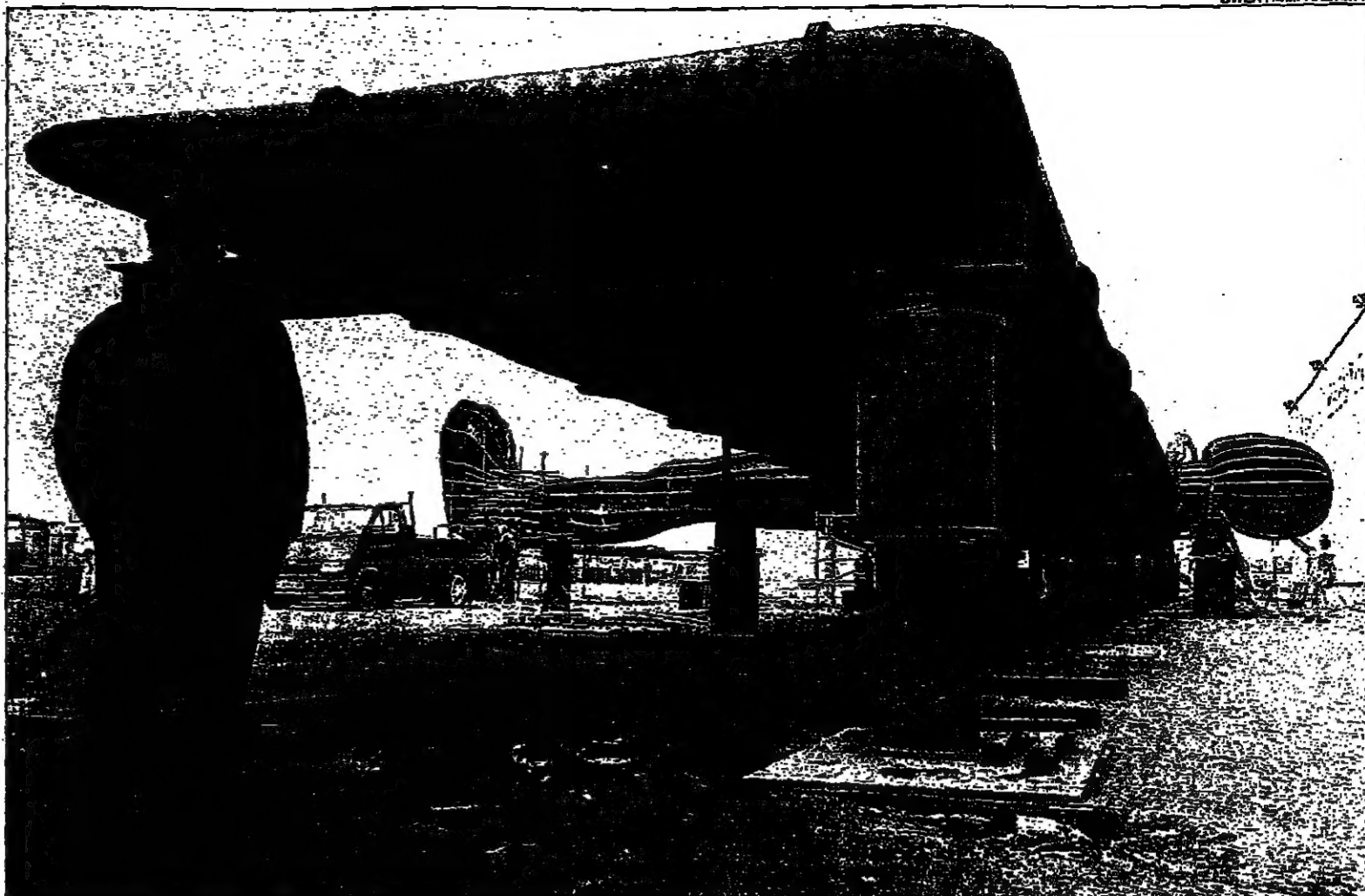
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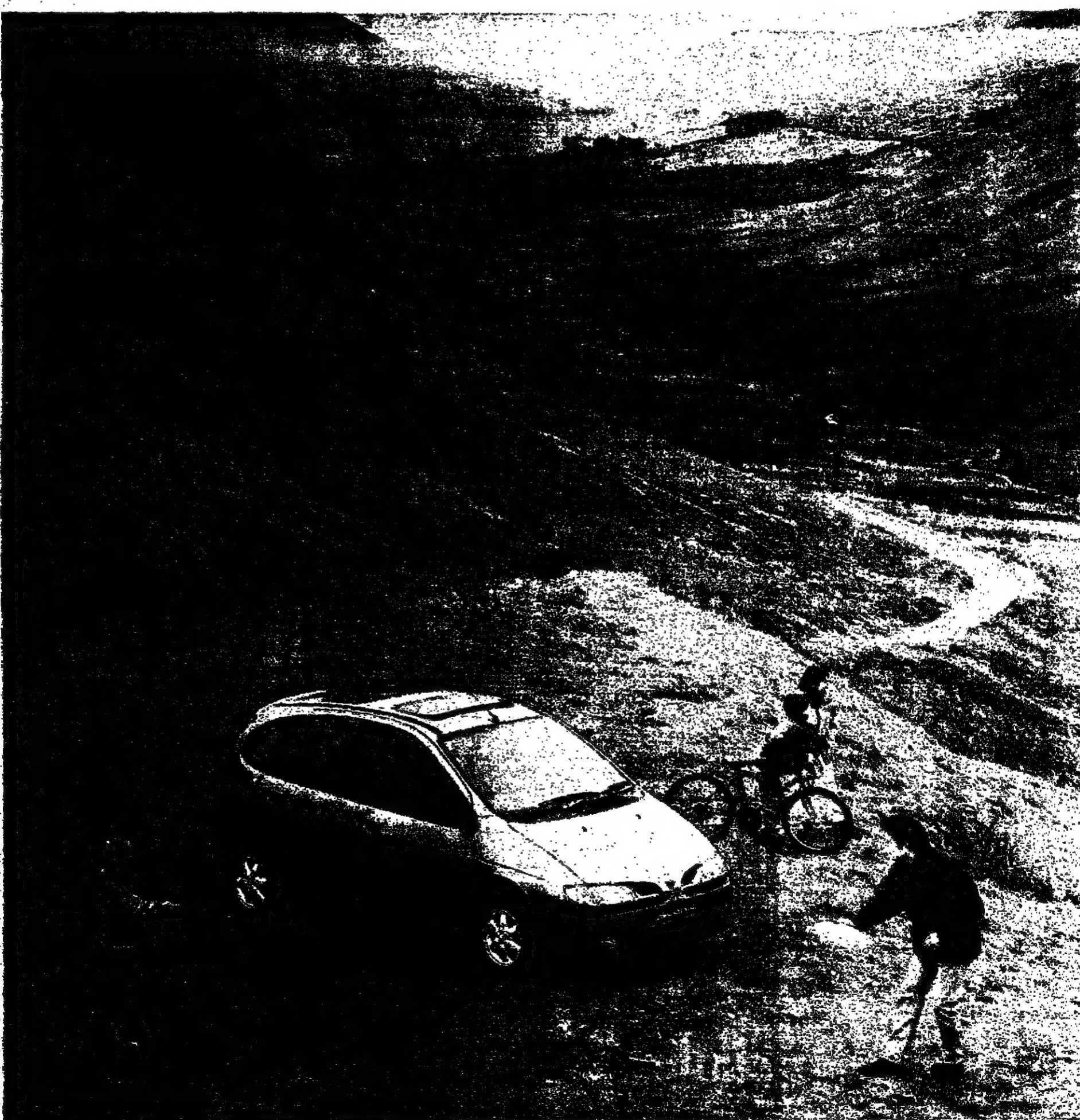
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Wings of steel: workmen in Hartlepool putting the finishing touches to the Angel of the North, Britain's biggest sculpture, yesterday. The figure, 20 metres high and with a 54-metre wingspan, was designed by Antony Gormley. It will be taken to its permanent site in Gateshead at the weekend



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IN THE SATURDAY TIMES



Steve Spielberg on cracking the box office

plus CHUMBAWAMBA SPLASH OUT

in metro: VENUS ENVY

The rise of erotic fiction

Motorists to face roadside drug-tests in pilot scheme

By ARTHUR LEATHLEY, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

MINISTERS yesterday took the first steps towards widespread roadside drug-testing of motorists as new figures suggested that large numbers of people drive with illegal substances in their blood.

The first police trials of handheld drug-testers will start next month. Lancashire, Strathclyde, Cleveland and Sussex police will test two sets of equipment that detect the presence of drugs either by a saliva test or by wiping the skin with an impregnated swab.

Tests will be carried out on thousands of drivers, who will be asked to volunteer, to discover whether the equipment can be used for wider testing. No charges will be brought against those found to have taken illicit drugs, unless the driver has proved unfit to drive.

However, campaigners for decriminalisation of cannabis accused the Government of

overlooking the bigger problem of medicinal drug use. Paul Flynn, a Labour MP who is vice-chairman of the Commons drugs misuse group, said the Government could exaggerate the dangers of recreational drugs.

"There is a danger of building a new mythology," Mr Flynn said. He added that the perils of medicinal drugs were still "largely disregarded".

More than one in five drivers killed in road traffic accidents was found to have some drug substance in their bloodstream, mainly cannabis, according to new government figures released yesterday. This compares with almost one in three fatalities whose judgment could have been impaired by alcohol.

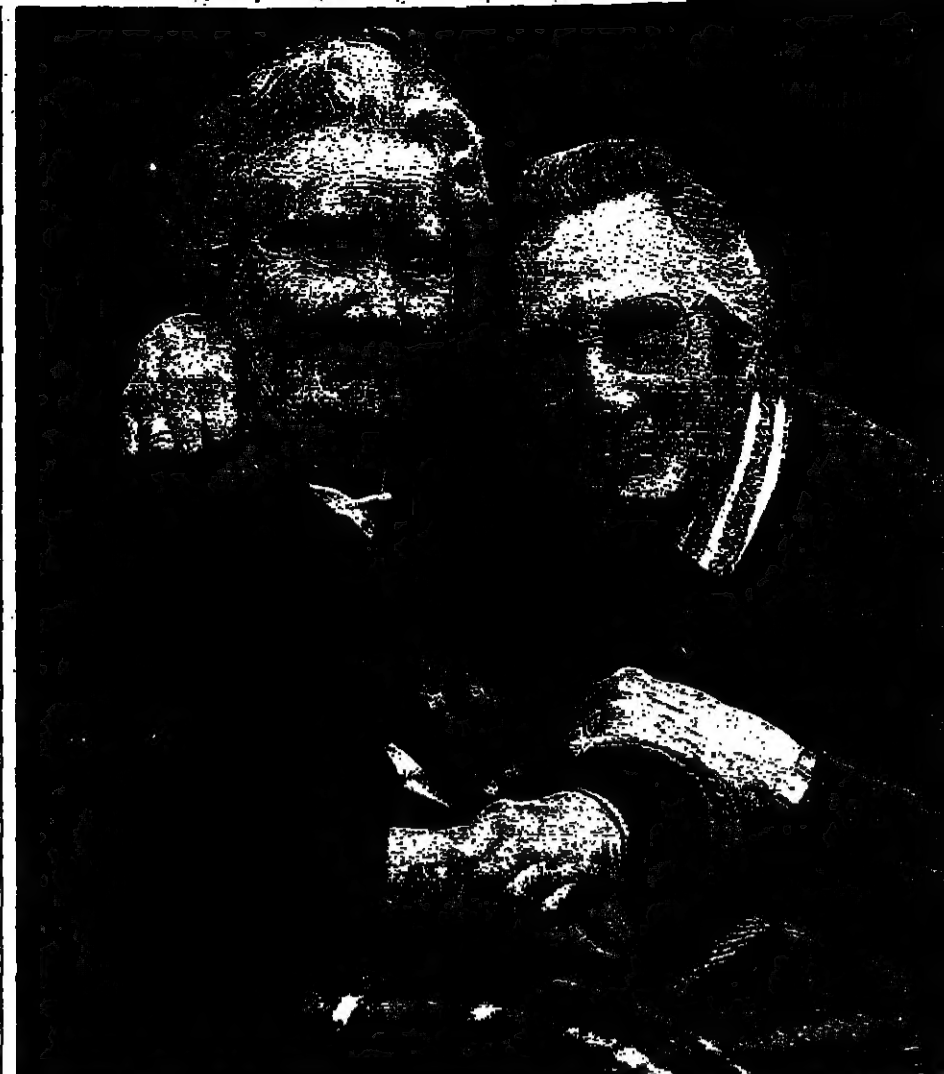
A study found that 18 per cent of drivers involved in fatal accidents had taken illicit drugs and a further 4 per cent had traces of prescribed drugs in their bloodstream. How-

ever, experts say that traces of cannabis can remain in the blood for four weeks, although the effects would fade within hours.

Ministers believe that widespread ignorance of the lasting effects of drugs results in many people driving while under their influence. They also believe that police need better training to spot signs of drug-induced behaviour.

Although the trials are designed to test the reliability of the newly-available equipment, ministers are keen to extend research to discover more accurate information about the effects of drugs.

Unveiling the results of the research, Baroness Hayman, the Roads Minister, said: "These new figures increase our understanding of the scale of illicit drug use on our roads, and the new tests will help to assess the suitability of drug screening devices for general day-to-day work."



Kate Dillon, left, with Lily Webster yesterday. They last saw each other in 1924

Chance glance reunites sisters after 74 years

By KATHRYN KNIGHT

FOR more than 70 years, Lily Webster had pondered the fate of Kate Dillon, the sister she last saw in 1924. After sharing ten years in a rural orphanage, the two were separated when they started domestic work and lost touch. But for the last five years, Kate, 88, has been staying in the same nursing home as Lily's husband John, only half a mile away from her home in Eastbourne.

And in an astonishing coincidence, Lily, 86, came face to face with the sister she had not seen for 74 years during one of her daily visits to see her husband. "I shouted: 'Good God that's my sister!'" she recognised, Lily said. "Even though she was only 15 the last time I saw her, I knew it was her right away. It was quite a jolt and I felt very emotional, but it was not until I got home that I broke down and cried my eyes out."

The two sisters were part of a family of five girls and three boys born in Co Clare, Ireland, who were orphaned when their mother Bridget died of a heart attack. The three youngest girls were sent to a convent-run orphanage,

only to be separated in 1924 when 14-year-old Kate was sent out to work as a maid for a local family.

The sisters soon lost contact, with Lily leaving Ireland to start a new life in London where her sister Eileen had become a housekeeper. She married and in 1985 moved to Weston-super-Mare with her husband.

Only recently did fate step in, when Lily's husband was taken into a local nursing home after his health deteriorated. Sadly, Kate, who had been suffering from senile dementia for the last five years, did not recognise her younger sister. But Lily was able to talk to Kate's daughter Carmel, 50, and the two checked birth certificates.

Now she is slowly piecing together more of Kate's past. "I have thought about her for years and I never really gave up hope, but it has been such a shock to find she was living just around the corner," Lily said. "My only regret is that we did not meet years ago when Kate was more herself. But I feel very contented now to know where she is and to be able to see her every day when I visit my husband."

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Shy student could not cope with life

Adrian Lee hears
Richard Todd's
wife tell how
she found body
of their son who
had shot himself

THE former wife of the actor Richard Todd described yesterday how she found their son dead in his bedroom from a single shotgun blast.

Seumas Todd, 20, had been expected to return to university on the morning he was discovered, an inquest at Grantham, Lincolnshire, was told. No motive was given but, after the 25-minute hearing, a note written by Seumas was returned to his mother Virginia, 56, a former model.

She is divorced from the actor, 78, famous for his portrayal of King Lear in the 1954 film *The Damned Busters*, but the couple still live together. The contents of the note, discovered by Seumas's older brother Andrew as he cleared the bedroom four days after the shooting, were not read at the inquest but Mr Todd had previously made them public. In his letter Seumas wrote on paper bearing the family address in Little Ponton, Lincolnshire, that he was a coward who could not cope with the challenges and difficulties in life. He wanted to grab life with both hands but knew that he would not be able to.

Seumas had also been tortured by his appearance. His mother told the inquest that he had suffered badly from acne and once locked himself in his room for three months. He had been prescribed the anti-depressant drug Prozac, she said, but was not on medication when his body was found on December 8 last year.

Mrs Todd said her son came home from the University of Northumbria at Newcastle, where he was in his first term of a politics degree, four days before his death. "I thought he was a bit tense," she said, but put it down to tensions.

On December 7 she and Mr Todd went to London leaving Seumas and Andrew, 28, at home. On her return the next day she went to her younger son's room, having noticed that his bag was still on the bed.

"I saw Seumas on the bed and realised he was dead," she said. "I noticed the shotgun. I screamed for help. I think I



Richard and Victoria Todd with their sons Seumas, left, and Andrew. Below left, Mrs Todd with Seumas in September, three months before he killed himself with a shotgun in his bedroom at his parents' home; right, Mrs Todd and Andrew arriving for the inquest in Grantham yesterday



swear downstairs. I was in a state of shock and don't remember much. I did not touch the shotgun.

The inquest was told that all four members of the family held shotgun certificates and the keys for the weapon were kept in the actor's desk. Mrs Todd said her son had appeared to have overcome his acne problems.

A year earlier he had been unhappy about something but

mother and son had agreed never to discuss the matter again. She said at one time she sought advice from a psychiatrist about him.

On the night of the shooting Seumas had asked Andrew to stop fussing about some washing, the inquest was told. Andrew said that he had gone to the lavatory at about 10pm and smelt what he thought was a burning smell coming from Seumas's room. He pre-

sented it was a cigarette and thought no more of it.

Mr Todd, who was nominated for an Oscar in 1949 for his acclaimed performance in *The Hasty Heart*, was not at yesterday's inquest. He is appearing in Oscar Wilde's *An Ideal Husband* at the Gielgud Theatre in London. Mr Todd, the son of an army major, has previously blamed his son's impulsive nature. "How that gentle, sweet-

natured boy must have agonised. We'll never know why or for how long." He wondered whether his son had found it difficult to cope with university life. Seumas was an average scholar but an outstanding sportsman who was shy and unassuming.

He said the onset of his son's acne "must have been a ghastly shock to a lad who had been physically flawless all his life... he took to his bed, shut the curtains and locked the door. Nobody except Virginia was allowed in. Meals were left for him in the kitchen and he would nip down there when there was nobody around."

His entry to university was delayed for a year but he had seemed to return to normal when his acne improved, socialised with friends and was still close to a local girl.

Mr Todd, whose mother committed suicide when he was a teenager, said he was haunted by his son's death.

"Should we have detected something deeply troubling him? Should I have been less stern with him?"

"Should Virginia not have gone to London with me that day? Should Andrew, whose relationship with Seumas had become more distant, have shown him greater affection? These are questions that will go unanswered always."

Mr Todd said he sobbed when he saw his son's body. "I looked down at him for perhaps a minute trying to stem my crying and control myself. Then I bent over and kissed him."

"As I straightened up and took another lingering look I said, 'Oh, you silly boy. You silly boy.'"

John Pert, the Grantham and District Coroner, recorded that Seumas had taken his own life when the balance of his mind was disturbed. There was no evidence of alcohol or drugs.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Council backs down on vouchers for wages

Council officers have dropped plans to pay staff with supermarket vouchers. Oxfordshire County Council had hoped to save up to £500,000 a year in national insurance payments by giving some employees 10 per cent of their pay in Sainsbury's, Marks & Spencer and Sainsbury's vouchers, or childcare vouchers.

Staff and unions were angered by the plan, disclosed in *The Times* last month. Chris Gray, county treasurer, said that it had been dropped because the controversy had made it likely that the Government would close the tax loophole the council had planned to exploit.

Deliberate crash

A father-of-three died when he apparently deliberately crashed his car into a lorry, having left his seven-year-old daughter at a police station. Neighbours said Frederick Dowling, 30, from Acocks Green, West Midlands, was agitated after a row at home.

Teacher cleared

A teacher has been cleared of raping a 15-year-old girl pupil ten years ago. The trial of Roland Hendry, 51, from Gotham, Nottinghamshire, was halted at Nottingham Crown Court after the judge said the prosecution evidence made it unsafe to continue.

Charge dropped

Police have dropped a speeding charge against a doctor on her way to help a woman with chest pains who later died of a heart attack. Dr Anna Biddle, from Locks Heath, Hampshire, had been caught by a camera at 51mph in a 30mph zone.

Long engagement

A man was trapped in a public lavatory in Northampton for 15 hours when the attendant locked up, not realising he was there. Michael Hall, 20, said he spent the night pacing up and down trying to keep warm after shouts for help were ignored.

Blood sport

A 3ft pike caught by an angler locked its teeth into his thumb as he tried to release his hook. Pete Meadows struggled in vain for two hours before walking half a mile to his GP in Somersham, Cambridgeshire, to have it removed.

Dog returns

A six-week-old Jack Russell snatched during a burglary at a house in Southend-on-Sea, Essex, has been reunited with its owners after being found in a lavatory on a train. The puppy was recognised by a vet when it was taken in for a check-up.

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Wind saved coast from worst of oil spill



The Liberian-registered *Sea Empress* which spilled over 72,000 tonnes of oil. Bird life was badly hit by pollution but tanker disaster could have been more severe, writes Nick Nuttall

LUCK saved the wildlife, beaches and fishing industry of West Wales when the *Sea Empress* grounded two years ago, spilling over 72,000 tonnes of oil.

If the wind had been blowing in the wrong direction and the disaster had happened during the breeding season for birds and the spawning season for fish, the effects could have been far more profound.

Professor Ron Edwards, chairman of the Sea Empress Environmental Evaluation Committee, told a meeting in Cardiff: "It could have been a lot worse. We were very fortunate but that is not to say that it was minimal."

In the days when the tanker

leaked most of its oil, a

southerly wind pushed the oil

away from the coast and

allowed the emergency

response teams to use chemical

dispersants.

Presiding over the committee's

report, he said that some mistakes were made and important lessons had to be learnt from the clean-up operation. The report raises doubts over the effectiveness of cleaning oiled seabirds. About 3,000 were rescued and cleaned, but the committee says from both a financial and an animal welfare stance, it might have been better to cull the birds.

Studies indicate that for every 100 guillemots cleaned and released into the wild, 83 die in the first month and perhaps only one will survive for a year.

"It might be kinder to kill

them humanely," the report

says.

It calls for more studies into

the stress birds suffer in

cleaning and how they might

survive longer after release.

Birds that spent much of their

time on the water were badly

hit, particularly the common

scoter, guillemots and razorbills.

The committee, whose report has been handed to the Welsh Office, is urging the Government to make coastal councils legally responsible for shore clean-up operations. They should draft contingency plans. A similar recommendation was made by Lord Donaldson in the wake of the *Braer* disaster in the Shetlands but not implemented.

Environmental impact studies, which in the case of the *Sea Empress* were paid for by taxpayers, should be met by the polluters via the International Oil Spill Compensation Fund, the committee says.

About 125 miles of coastline were affected and the clean-up lasted for more than 18 months in some places after the vessel grounded at St Ann's Head, Milford Haven. The emergency was the third big oil spill to hit Britain after the *Torrey Canyon* in 1967 and the *Braer* in 1993.

Professor Edwards said: "It happened when the birds were not nesting and the fish were not spawning. Tourist beaches were not crowded and there was time to clean up before they arrived."

The report says the clean-up was well planned and executed and the use of dispersants sprayed over the area almost certainly reduced shoreline oiling.

The report calls for more research to check that the



A guillemot is cleaned after the oil spill. The report says that most rescued birds died soon after their release

commercially exploited crab, lobster, bass and whelk populations have fully recovered. There was a big fall in the population of the rare cushion starfish in the rockpools of West Angle Bay, close to the disaster site, with numbers falling from more than 150 to 30 individuals. A slow recovery is under way.

Oil concentration in molluscs were high for many months. But there appeared to

be no impact on seals, porpoises and other mammals, although oil levels increased in the tissue of some fish species temporarily.

Yesterday Glenda Jackson, the Transport Minister, announced that the Government was chartering three emergency towing tugs to assist ships in distress. They would be based in the Dover Strait, the Minches off northwest Scotland and in the Western

Approaches off Cornwall. The tugs have been tested for three years and have attended 180 incidents. The Coastguard Agency said they had been effective in preventing pollution.

However, environmentalists criticised a decision to put the tugs on station between October and March, arguing that they should be on year-long standby.

The Royal Society for the

Protection of Birds also accused the Government of "foot-dragging" over the creation of Marine Environment High Risk Areas around the coast. Such areas, in which there would tighter rules on shipping and other activities, were a key recommendation of Lord Donaldson.

"The Government promised to issue a consultation document but has so far failed to act," the society said.

Lichen may rid sites of uranium waste

By Nick Nuttall

A LICHEN that could help to clean up land contaminated with radioactive activity has been discovered in Cornwall. Scientists were astonished to find the tiny organism blooming on spoil heaps from redundant uranium mines.

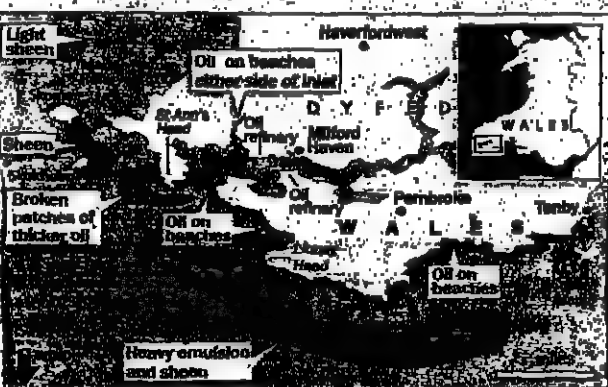
The brown lichen, *Trapelia involuta*, is making melanin or a melanin-like pigment similar to that produced by human beings in response to sunlight. That allows it to tolerate and soak up radioactive minerals that would be poisonous and genetically damaging to other organisms.

The researchers suggest that the lichen and its pigment could be harnessed to clean up sites contaminated by uranium mining or the fall-out from disasters such as the Chernobyl fire.

It may not be possible with existing technology to grow the quantity of lichen needed to treat contaminated land. But identifying the gene that is controlling the pigment may allow scientists to engineer it into bacteria or plants that would be easier to use.

The discovery, reported in *Nature*, was made by a team at the Natural History Museum in London and the University of Nottingham. William Parvis, of the museum, said yesterday that about 0.5 per cent of the dry weight of the lichen was found to be uranium minerals. Plants that can absorb uranium materials have also been identified but the concentrations in their tissues are minute.

Lichens cover 6 per cent of the Earth. Dr Parvis said they could be useful to mining companies because the presence of some species on certain soils or rocks may indicate vast ore deposits in the ground below.



Frot on the trail of Tamworth Two

By Kathryn Knight

FANS of the Tamworth Two, the witty piglets escaped from their abattoir last month, will soon be able to relive the excitement of their getaway. The tourist office in Malmesbury, Wiltshire, is to launch a "Trotter Trail".

Bliss and Sundance forced their way out of their slaughterhouse yard and

swam across a river, evading capture in the wild for a week. They are now living the good life at an animal sanctuary near by in Chippenham, but in Malmesbury the excitement has not died down.

"We've been inundated with calls from people wanting to find out all about the pigs," Sandra Pell, manager of the tourist office, said. "So we decided to do something to react to public

demand." Trotter Trail leaflets will be ready in about two weeks, showing the key sites in the pigs' adventures and eventual capture.

"Basically it will show where they escaped, crossed the river and their route later," Ms Pell said. "Some of it is on private land so we will also mark a route the public can take where they can see where it all happened."

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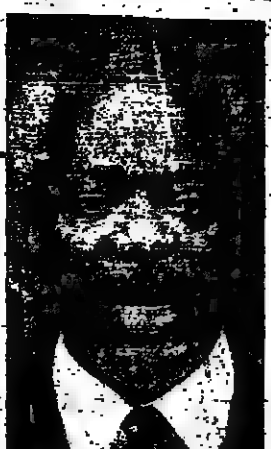
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US alert on Saddam's secret Scuds

The Pentagon says the dictator has stockpiled dozens of missiles capable of hitting neighbouring states with chemical or biological warheads, Ian Brodie writes in Washington



Annan may travel to Iraqi capital

Annan consults Big Five on deal

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

THE United Nations Secretary-General pressed the big powers last night to spell out their bottom line on Iraq in anticipation of a possible last-ditch mission to Baghdad as early as this weekend.

Kofi Annan summoned the five permanent members of the Security Council — Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States — for talks in his office in New York on defusing the crisis over UN weapons inspections in Iraq.

Aides said that Mr Annan wanted a clear understanding between the big powers on the terms of a possible deal he

could offer to Iraq if he travelled to Baghdad. Some diplomats suggested that the Security Council could outline its offer in a resolution, although Mr Annan prefers to keep it confidential.

Britain and the United States are insisting that no important concessions are made that would prevent UN inspectors from resuming their hunt for hidden weapons of mass destruction. "No sanctuaries, no time limits, no restrictions," one diplomat said. But Russia and France are more willing to accept a compromise that would limit the inspectors' access to eight so-called "presidential" sites declared out of bounds by Iraq, one of which in the centre of Baghdad contains 702 buildings.

Mr Annan this week cancelled a five-nation tour of the Middle East in order to remain at his desk to deal with the confrontation with Iraq. Aides insist that Mr Annan will travel to Baghdad only if he thinks he has the basis for a deal with Iraq that would allow the inspectors to resume work.

originally bought from the Soviet Union, but he was not satisfied that Iraq had disarmed itself of the two Scud versions made in Iraq. He has also said that 45 nerve-gas or germ-warfare warheads had not been found since the end of the Gulf War.

The Pentagon's intelligence digest, confirming earlier reports, said that Iraq was believed to be hiding its Scuds at or near some of Saddam's presidential palaces or at compounds used by the Republican Guards, his most loyal troops. Suspected sites were near Baghdad and two towns further to the north, Tikrit, Saddam's home base, and Baiji.

Other weapons were said to be hidden in western and southern Iraq where there was also believed to be a build-up of hidden launchers, propellants and support equipment.

One optimistic argument is that the Scuds may be of limited use to Saddam because once he ordered them to be fired he would immediately confirm to the world that he has indeed been evading UN restrictions and ignoring his promise to scrap all such weapons under the Gulf War ceasefire seven years ago.

Baghdad might prefer to keep a covert missile force as



RAF ground crew set up a cockpit of a Tornado bomber, part of the strike force in the Gulf, at a base in northern Kuwait yesterday

part of long-term rebuilding efforts rather than use it for short-term military gain, the intelligence report said. Other military analysts believe that he might still be tempted to

use them against Israel and Gulf states. Israel, which has nuclear weapons, has said it will retaliate if fired on by Iraq, unlike the Gulf War when the Jewish state was hit

by 39 Iraqi Scuds carrying conventional warheads but did not respond under a promise made to the then American President, George Bush. Israeli officials have

said that this time, Iraq has sent a message to Israel promising not to launch a missile attack. The claim was later denied in Baghdad.

An Iraqi Scud caused the

largest number of American casualties in one attack during the Gulf war when it demolished a barracks in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, killing 28 soldiers.

Clinton spurns offer of access to eight palaces

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON AND MICHAEL THEODOULOU IN NICOSIA

PRESIDENT Clinton swiftly rejected an Iraqi proposal yesterday to open eight of President Saddam Hussein's palaces for inspection by representatives of the United Nations Security Council but not to the regular UN weapons inspectors.

Tariq Aziz, Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister, described the offer during an interview with CNN in Baghdad. He said that the UN special commission for weapons inspection, which has the job of finding and eliminating Saddam's chemical, biological and other weapons of mass destruction, was the adversary and should not be the judge.

Less than an hour later, Mr Clinton, speaking in Washington, insisted that Saddam must allow the inspectors back with "full and free" access to all suspected weapons sites. He added: "We all hope we can avoid the use of force but let's face it, in the end that's up to Saddam Hussein."

White House officials said Iraq could not set conditions. It was up to the UN to do the work as it saw fit. With time

for diplomacy running out, jittery Gulf Arab states urged the Iraqi leader to comply fully with United Nations demands.

Mr Aziz had called on Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary-General, to establish a parallel body of arms experts to inspect the presidential sites, claiming the existing organisation was hostile to Baghdad and the cause of the crisis. "The Secretary-General and the Security Council should be the judge," Unscorn had persistently lied about Iraq's weapons programmes and the extent of the presidential sites, he claimed.

The new organisation should be headed by a representative of Mr Annan and should include an equal number of members appointed by the five countries with permanent seats on the Security Council. These countries could appoint diplomats or arms experts, including Unscorn members. Also, the body could include representatives from

the 19 countries currently part of Unscorn. Mr Aziz ruled out an Iraqi strike against Israel or Kuwait in the event of an American attack. "We don't have any intentions to strike at anyone except the aggressor and inside our territory."

Politically, America and Britain would be the losers if they attacked Iraq, he said. "Every person in this region will say this is a criminal aggression against an Arab and Muslim state."

William Cohen, the US Defence Secretary, ended a three-day tour of the Gulf, where the United States and Britain have amassed the biggest concentration of naval firepower since the 1991 war that liberated Kuwait, with a visit to the aircraft carrier, USS George Washington. He claimed to have won "strong support" for America's tough position.

Mr Cohen said a military strike was "a last option" and, in a pep talk to the sailors, Mr Cohen, a published poet, said: "You are the steel in the sword of freedom. You are the tip of the sword."



Carey: warning of "no risk-free option"

Carey urges co-operation

DR GEORGE Carey, the Archbishop of Canterbury, broke his silence over Iraq yesterday, insisting there was "no risk-free option" so long as Saddam Hussein's present attitude continued (Ruth Gledhill writes). His statement, made after a visit to Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, appeared to indicate support for the Government line. However, his office denied that he was supporting military action and said he was issuing a plea to Saddam to co-operate.

Egypt called on to support build-up of allied power

BY MICHAEL BINTON DIPLOMATIC EDITOR

DEREK FATCHETT, the Foreign Office Minister of State, is hoping for a meeting in Cairo today with President Mubarak to try to persuade him to throw Egypt's weight behind the allied build-up in the Gulf.

Arriving hard on the heels of Muhammad al-Sahaf, the Iraqi Foreign Minister, Mr Fatchett completes a rapid Middle East tour that took him yesterday to Oman and the United Arab Emirates, where he also sought support for Britain's attempt to avert military strikes against Iraq.

Mr Fatchett said: "We have a clear message to Saddam, that if he blocks diplomatic efforts we have the military capability to make him comply with UN resolutions."

Mr Mubarak said after talks with Mr al-Sahaf that the situation was dangerous and that it was important to implement Security Council resolutions to avoid a crisis.

Egypt has opposed any military strike against Iraq. Mr

Mubarak said he had received a letter from the Emir of Kuwait saying that he also supported a peaceful solution.

The Egyptian President said there were no plans to convene an Arab summit, and no specific Arab proposals to end the crisis. However, the Arab League, based in Cairo, has been negotiating a proposed compromise in Baghdad. Mr Fatchett will also call on the League's Secretary-General, Esmat Abdel-Meguid, to discuss the negotiations.

Ministers from member countries of the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) were in Kuwait yesterday, where they called on Iraq to "lift all obstacles" to UN inspections and warned Baghdad that it alone would be blamed if the crisis led to military action.

Lamberto Dini, the Italian Foreign Minister, said yesterday that Italy would make its airbases available in the event of an attack on Iraq in the hope of increasing pressure on Baghdad for a settlement.

Ankara coy over border clashes

FROM ANDREW FINKEL IN ISTANBUL

TURKEY'S F16s and helicopter gunships were for the second day running in action on the Iraqi border yesterday and are reported to have killed 20 members of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

Details of the operation remain sketchy, with Mesut Yilmaz, the Turkish Prime Minister, yesterday denying that any Turkish troops had been involved in cross-border operations. Military spokesmen have also rebuffed Turkish newspaper accounts that Iraqi Kurds were fleeing towards the Turkish frontier.

"Turkey is reluctant to be cast as the aggressor, even before the Americans begin to bomb," according to Mehmet



Vladimir Zhirinovsky talking to the media in Baghdad after the fracas at Yerevan

Zhirinovsky lashes out at ambassador

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN YEREVAN

VLADIMIR ZHIRINOVSKY'S chaotic, noisy and much-delayed humanitarian mission finally arrived in Baghdad yesterday, but not before the loudmouth ultra-nationalist leader disgraced himself by attacking a senior Russian diplomat.

Just as Mr Zhirinovsky's three-day delay in reaching the Iraqi capital was finally resolved, the extremist Russian parliamentarian saw the publicity value of his trip evaporate after he was roundly denounced in parliament and the press.

The incident occurred at Yerevan airport where Mr Zhirinovsky was told that he was not allowed to take his party of more than 200 politicians and journalists to Baghdad, and that he would be

restricted to only 30 people to accompany the seven and a half tonnes of medicines.

The unfortunate victim of his anger was Andrei Urnov, the urbane Russian Ambassador to Yerevan, who tried repeatedly in his most diplomatic way to explain that without the reduction of the delegation the United Nations would not allow the plane to reach Iraqi airspace.

The frustrated former presidential candidate then attacked the hapless envoy. Some witnesses claim he struck him. A camera crew filming the incident was set upon by Mr Zhirinovsky's bodyguards who seized the videotape.

Gennadi Seleznev, Speaker of the

Duma, the lower house of parliament, denounced the action as an "act of hooliganism".

Other parties in parliament moved quickly to disassociate themselves from the mission, suggesting that Mr Zhirinovsky's presence in Baghdad at such a sensitive time could undermine Russia's mediation efforts.

"The populist show staged by the Liberal Democratic Leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky has nothing to do with standing up for Russia's national interests or a humanitarian mission to provide medicines to the Iraqi population," said a statement from the Russian Regions group in parliament. "A serious undertaking has become a farce, harming the image of the Duma both outside and inside the country."



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Thousands flee as bombing raids add to Sierra Leone mayhem

WEST AFRICAN forces bombed Freetown yesterday, escalating the conflict in Sierra Leone as they attempted to evict the military junta that seized power last May.

The bombing raids by warplanes and artillery attacks, as well as indiscriminate firing by soldiers loyal to the coup leader, Major Johnny Paul Koroma, killed at least 50 people in Freetown and made thousands homeless.

All workers said mayhem reigned as thousands of civilians fled. Hundreds have been boarding ransacked boats heading for neighbouring Guinea. One report

At least 50 die in fighting as Nigerian-led peace force tightens noose and cuts exits from besieged Freetown, writes David Orr

said 50 had drowned as they tried to escape by river. The roads out of the capital have been cut by the Nigerian-led peacekeeping force which has imposed a night-time curfew on Freetown.

The latest fighting erupted after a breakdown of diplomatic efforts to reinstate President Kabbah, ousted

by Major Koroma. His forces have been facing an onslaught for the past week from the regional peacekeeping force in the hills around Freetown. Both sides have accused each other of causing provocation.

In the indiscriminate firing, shells hit residential areas despite repeated pleas to combatants not to

target civilian areas. About 2,500 people are said to have sought refuge with the International Committee of the Red Cross in the city.

City residents said bands of youths had taken advantage of the fighting to steal cars and loot. A British volunteer nurse told BBC radio yesterday she and a companion were robbed by Sierra Leone soldiers after being pinned down by gunfire for four days near her hospital. "This morning amid the shelling and the mayhem I was manhandled out of my car. I was slapped on the face. My stuff was taken off. The guy I

was with was robbed," said Chris Naik. She added that about 20 soldiers took over the car, but because they were so young and so drugged they were unable to drive it. These guys have no discipline. They are drunk, they don't know what they are doing."

The Nigerian-led force has the backing of the United Nations to restore democracy in Sierra Leone. General Timothy Sheldip, its commander, said: "We are moving with full force and we are not joking."

President Kabbah, at present in exile in Guinea, has vowed to return home "very, very soon".

Under the terms of a regional accord, power is due to be handed back to him in April by his usurper, Major Koroma.

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) estimates that more than 200,000 Sierra Leoneans and some 14,000 Liberian refugees are in urgent need of food aid. WFP requires 2,400 tonnes of food each month to feed them, but the agency's stocks have run out.

"We're deeply concerned about the effects of the fighting on the civilians and the thousands of destitute people in Sierra Leone," Paul Ares, WFP regional manager

in West Africa, said. "We have repeatedly requested the clearance [of bringing food in]. However, until now such clearance has not been forthcoming."

There are fears that attempts by the Nigerians to seize the capital will only escalate the fighting. And even if they manage to take Freetown, the junta forces could easily take their struggle to the bush, as did the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) before them. The RUF waged a violent campaign against the Sierra Leone Government before finally agreeing to peace terms in 1996.

President 'was with Lewinsky for 40 minutes'

MONICA LEWINSKY spent part of a weekend afternoon alone with President Clinton in the Oval Office, according to a retired Secret Service officer yesterday.

Lewis Fox said in an interview that he admitted Ms Lewinsky to the office where she remained for at least 40 minutes while he was on guard outside the door.

Mr Fox is the first person to say publicly that he saw the President and Ms Lewinsky alone together. His evidence could be crucial to the investigation whether the pair had a sexual relationship, and if Mr Clinton persuaded her to lie about it.

The President said last month during his deposition in the Paula Jones sexual harassment case that he did not remember ever being alone with Ms Lewinsky, according to leaked accounts of his testimony.

Mr Fox was interviewed by The Washington Post after his earlier comments to a local television station near his home in Pennsylvania that Ms Lewinsky was "quite frequently" at the White House on weekends. Mr Starr issued a subpoena for the videotape and the television station has handed it over.

Mr Fox, who retired in January last year after 27 years with the Secret Service, was not one of the agents who are in the line of fire to protect the President. He served in the less glamorous uniformed branch whose members guard doors, man the metal detectors and patrol the grounds at the White House.

Mr Fox recalled how Ms Lewinsky arrived outside the Oval Office saying she had documents for the President to review on a weekend afternoon some time during the autumn of 1995. Ms Lewinsky has reportedly said that she started her affair with Mr

Claim by Secret Service doorman could be crucial evidence, reports Ian Brodie

Clinton on November 15, 1995. Mr Fox said the President's secretary, Betty Currie, was not on duty that day. He opened the office door and told Mr Clinton there were papers for him.

The President was able to see Ms Lewinsky through the doorway and told the officer to send her in. Mr Fox told the Post. The door closed and she did not re-emerge during the remaining 40 minutes of his shift.

White House officials said they could not confirm or deny Mr Fox's account, but they did cast doubt on it because, they said, even at weekends only Mr Clinton's assistants made decisions on access to the Oval

Office, not security officers. A Secret Service officer allowing someone in would be a deviation from standard practice.

Mr Starr has expanded his inquiry to determine whether six other women who denied affairs with Mr Clinton were lying. He has issued subpoenas for sworn affidavits given by the six to lawyers for Ms Jones. The counsel wants to know if their denials were to protect the President and whether the White House made any attempts to ensure their silence.

He will also seek the testimony before the grand jury from a woman who has long been a close aide to Mr Clinton. Nancy Herrmelt, his appointments secretary in Arkansas, is now director of Oval Office operations and keeper of the President's appointments diary.

She sits beside Mrs Currie, who has reportedly told the grand jury that Mr Clinton and Ms Lewinsky were sometimes alone together and that she retrieved a box of gifts to her from him, including a dress, a hat pin and a brooch, so that Ms Lewinsky would not have to give them to investigators.

Ms Lewinsky's own appearance before the grand jury is not expected to be today as anticipated. It has been postponed to allow more time for negotiations between Mr Starr and her lawyer, William Ginsburg, over whether she will be granted immunity from prosecution in exchange for her evidence.

Ms Lewinsky's mother, Marcia Lewis, 49, cut an elegant figure as she was summoned to the grand jury. Ms Lewinsky is said to have confided in her about an affair with Mr Clinton. Ms Lewis, divorced from Ms Lewinsky's father, is engaged to Peter Straus, chairman of a radio and newspaper company in New York. He is 74.

Mr Fox says he stood guard outside the Oval Office

First Lady inspired by husband's dedication to his job

By Ian Brodie

HILLARY CLINTON offered another impassioned defence of her husband yesterday, saying that the President was bearing up well under the White House sex scandal allegations.

Mr Clinton was, she said, an "inspiration" to her in the way he got up every morning to get on with the work the American people had elected him to do.

She did not think the uproar over illicit sex and a cover-up would evaporate, but expected that it would "slowly dissipate over time under the weight of its own insubstantiality".

"We've already seen how much of this charge and countercharge does not withstand the scrutiny of much attention at all," Mrs Clinton said. She refused to address specifics of the charges.

"I'm not going to add anything to what the President has already said," Mrs Clinton declared. He has denied a sexual relationship with Monica Lewinsky or that he encouraged her to lie. He has not defined just what the relationship with her was, nor kept his earlier promise to give as many answers as soon as he could.

Mrs Clinton said her husband was "doing very well" despite the allegations. The primary issue on his mind was the looming showdown with President Saddam Hussein.

Describing Saddam as a man "without conscience", Mrs Clinton said America and the world faced an "extraordinary threat". An issue facing the international community was how to strike against places where biological and chemical weapons were stockpiled.

Mrs Clinton was briefing a handful of reporters on camera about the White House's plans for celebrating the millennium.



Alex Bustillo charges Washington tourists for photographs of them beside cutouts of Bill Clinton and Monica Lewinsky, whose head is on Marilyn Monroe's body

Experts' plea to postpone euro is rejected

FROM CHARLES BRENNER IN BRUSSELS

THE European Commission yesterday brushed aside calls from economists to delay monetary union, insisting the euro was on course and postponement would cause upheaval.

Commenting on this week's appeal for delay from 155 German and Austrian experts, Yves-Thibault de Silguy, the commissioner overseeing the single currency, said none of their arguments was new. "There are bound to be more attacks as we approach the day, but they are not going to stop it happening on time," he said.

Sounding the Commission's regular refrain, M de Silguy said any postponement of the date for the euro launch on January 1 next year would undermine the credibility of European governments and the EU as a whole. "There would be economic and political upheaval," he said. Privately, the Commission is concerned at opposition in Germany to the euro.

M de Silguy outlined the Commission's latest plans for ensuring a smooth transition to the currency, from its inception in January to the introduction of notes and coins three years later.

It expects banks not to charge for exchanging national currencies for the new notes and coins, and it favours a fairly rapid switchover in the early months of 2002.

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Beauties of Italy praised by Yeltsin

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

A DAY after embarrassing his hosts in Rome with a series of gaffes, a hearty and reinvigorated President Yeltsin yesterday bounced back to end his three-day trip with a tribute to the beauty of Italian women.

A bemused-looking Mr Yeltsin, 67, had earlier appeared not to understand reporters' questions, and had failed to observe customary protocol at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. But after a "warm" audience with the Pope, which overran by five minutes, on the problems of post-Communist Russia, Mr Yeltsin won applause at a banquet given by President Scalfaro by expressing his "boundless love for Rome, Italy and Italian women". His wife Naina, sitting at his side, appeared not to mind.

Vatican officials said the Russian leader was alert and well informed during his meeting with the pontiff, and had been struck by the Pope's remark that Europe needed its "two lungs", Russia and the rest of Europe, to "work together if it is to breathe properly".

Together with Boris Nemtsov, the rising young Russian reformer, Mr Yeltsin also signed several commercial contracts to boost Italian investment in the Russian economy, including a deal for gas and oil exploration in Russia, and a deal for Fiat to return to Russia to build 150,000 cars a year.

Leading article, page 21

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مكتبة الامم

FEBRUARY 12

On a fast track to tragedy

Death of a PRINCESS

The Times continues its serialisation of the most searching journalistic investigation yet into the death of Diana, Princess of Wales. In the third extract from their new book Thomas Sancton and Scott MacLeod reveal how much Dodi relied on his drivers and bodyguards

Dodi Fayed under the driver to go faster? The question is a troubling part of the puzzle left by the terrible crash, and the answer may never be known. It is plausible that Dodi did give such an instruction, though probably not because of a macho impulse to prove his power. Nor because he was some reckless speed demon or a bullying backseat driver. Dodi could have reacted because he felt under pressure, relying instinctively on his ever-present retinue of drivers and bodyguards.

Dodi was not with some forgettable starlet that night. Falling in love with Diana, Princess of Wales, was the most incredible thing that had ever happened to him. For a deeply insecure 40-year-old, she represented the ultimate conquest of a beautiful and famous woman, the elusive soulmate of a lifetime's search, and the match that would make his father as proud as he could ever be. When Dodi arrived in Paris with the Princess on August 30, it was the first time that the couple had found themselves being chased by a pack of photographers.

For a deeply insecure man, the Princess was the ultimate conquest

Dodi may not have been reckless, yet he seemed to put blind faith in the chauffeurs and bodyguards that his father had provided for him since his days in primary school in Alexandria. When a driver was at the wheel, he rarely wore a seatbelt in the back. Dodi's cousin of bodyguards struck many of his friends as excessive. He would explain that his father insisted on the protection, saying that Dodi could be kidnapped or killed for his money. But their presence was so invasive that it caused his former wife Suzanne Greghard to resent the intrusion during their marriage. "He felt better," she says, "but we were never really alone."

A chilling preview of the tragedy in Paris seems to have occurred in a fast ride up Madison Avenue in New York in the mid-eighties. Dodi and Koo Stark, the then girlfriend of the Duke of York, were being chased by paparazzi, and Dodi reportedly ordered the driver to step on it. Roland Joffe (the film director) believes the illusions that Dodi and the Princess each lived played no small part in driving events towards the tragic destination. "Dodi had a deep

streak of loneliness, and the world of bodyguards made him feel secure and protected," Joffe says. "You could feel the emotional buzz in the Ritz corridor that night: all that escape planning was a fantasy. Those trappings of invulnerability made them feel that they could speed through Paris and escape. Everybody became an actor. Somehow there was this privacy that had to be protected and photographs that had to be stolen."

The emotions are very deep, and that puts people in a strange state of heightened anxiety as well as heightened delight. They want to go off to the press in one way, and then they want to run from it in the other. I can see how, under pressure, you would begin to repeat all the things that you know made you feel safe. That's the strange thing about wealth. Often, if it is used in a particular way, it also creates a great fantasy world that is self-perpetuating. That was the world they both lived in. In hindsight, those were tragic decisions. It made it easier for an accident to result."

Barbara Broccoli, a friend of Dodi, says he was terrified of high speeds, and would never have got into the car if he had smelt alcohol on the driver's breath. But she believes that Dodi would have wanted to shield the Princess from any unpleasantness. "I think that he would have probably just wanted to protect her, to take care of her," she says. "A suggestion that he somehow would have enjoyed this is disgusting. He wasn't like that at all. I'm sure that he just wanted to get her somewhere safe."

That refuge, of course, was Dodi's second-floor bachelor apartment at 1 Rue Arsène-Houssaye, a 10 to 15-minute drive from the Ritz, depending on the traffic, down one of the most romantic boulevards in Paris. Even if there had not been a paparazzi in sight, Dodi would have been anxious to get back. For he planned to ask the Princess very special question later that night.



Wherever Dodi Fayed and the Princess went, they found themselves pursued by photographers

In search of lost memories

THE BODYGUARD

OF THE key witnesses, none seemed more important than the bodyguard Trevor Rees-Jones, the lone survivor of the accident and thus the only person who could possibly know what was going on inside the Mercedes in the critical final moments.

At 11.45 on Tuesday, September 19, last year Judge Hervé Stephan, the examining magistrate, arrived at the hospital accompanied only by his secretary. They were taken by hospital security agents to the intensive care unit. Professor Jean-Jacques Rouby met them outside Rees-Jones's room, guarded round the clock by two uniformed police officers, and laid down the ground rules. The patient

hated there were numerous photographers and numerous cameras that bothered us. That really upset the Princess and Dodi... I went to see the photographers. I asked them to move back. They were trying to enter the Ritz by the front door... (The couple) were eating their meal and we (Kees Wingfield and Rees-Jones) had eaten our meal. Dodi changed the plan, the Princess, Dodi, Henri Paul and I left through the back exit. There were more photographers at the back. From that point, he has no memory of the journey? I remember that we were followed, that's all. Where were they going? We were going to the apartment.



Trevor Rees-Jones

■ On the Champs Elysées? Yes. ■ Does he remember how far they were followed, and by whom? There were two cars and a motorcycle. I do not remember the route. ■ Can he provide any details about the cars and the motorcycle? It seems to me there was one white car with a boot which opened at the back, and three doors, but I don't remember anything else. ■ So the cars followed after the departure from the Ritz? Yes. ■ Does he remember how Monsieur Paul was called and by whom? Dodi called him so he could drive us from the back of the hotel. ■ Can he tell me why? No. It was Dodi who transcribed the plan, not I. ■ Then what was the original plan? The original idea was to leave from the front with two cars, so we could keep the photographers as far away as possible. I thought it would be better to have two cars. ■ Does he know the Place de la Concorde? Next to the Ritz? ■ No. Next to the Ritz is the Place Vendôme. The Place de la Concorde is next to the Champs Elysées. I don't remember. Every-one was driving fast.

■ Does he remember what happened after the departure from the Ritz? I remember getting into this car, and I do not remember anything else. ■ Concerning the accident, he has no memory of what happened? No. ■ Does he have any memory of what happened earlier at the Ritz? Yes. ■ Can he tell me? When we arrived at the

As restless in death as in life

AT THE Fulham mortuary in West London, a post-mortem examination was performed on Dodi Fayed, as required by law for British residents who die abroad.

Just as that grim task was being finished a few hours later, another hearse pulled up. Inside was a blond wood coffin bearing Diana, Princess of Wales. By a quirk of timing, like a modernistic staging of Romeo and Juliet, the two caskets passed side by side on their way in and out of the mortuary. (As of this writing, nothing has filtered from the British post-mortem except for the fact that the Princess and Dodi showed traces of a "normal" level of alcohol consumption the night before.)

At 7.30pm - when Mohamed Al Fayed, his brother Saleh, his brother Ali, who had now arrived from the United States, a nephew and the Egyptian Ambassador, Dr Mohamed Shaker, following in a cortege of three Mercedes and a Range Rover - a black 1985 Jaguar hearse took Dodi's coffin up Holland Park Road to the A40 and on to the London Mosque in Regent's Park, where a 20-minute prayer service was held. Escorted by three cars and six motorcycle outriders of the Metropolitan Police, the convoy then



Mohamed Al Fayed had the coffin transferred to his estate

speed through London's streets a final time, en route to an interfaith cemetery in Brookwood, Surrey.

The mourners arrived 90 minutes later, at 10pm, after the setting of the late summer sun. They stepped through stones and weeds to reach a large plot in the Muslim section of the cemetery that had been hastily purchased by a family representative earlier in the day. Cemetery workers hoisted the coffin from the hearse and then lowered it into the ground. In accordance with tradition, two attendants lowered themselves into the

grave, opened the coffin and gently moved Dodi's linen-shrouded body so that it would face in the direction of Mecca.

Once the soil had been shovelled back into the hole, the imam spent 15 minutes reading from the Koran. "On this day," he prayed, "no soul shall be unjustly treated, but neither shall you be rewarded, but according to what you have wrought. On this day, the inhabitants of Paradise shall be taken up with joy."

Dodi proved to be as restless in death as he had been in life. His family strictly observed

the 40-day mourning period, repeatedly visiting his grave to say prayers over it, which Muslims believe will enable more sins to be forgiven. At 60 Park Lane, a tape player in Dodi's study piped Koranic readings throughout his apartment, which was empty and still, save for the flickering of candles in each room.

But once the 40 days were up, his father had Dodi's coffin disinterred and transferred to a new family burial ground at his country estate in Oxley, Surrey. This, said a Harrods spokesman, was so the beloved eldest son would be nearer his family.

There was another reason, however: Al Fayed was upset with the owner of Brookwood cemetery. Al Fayed paid £30,000 for Dodi's plot, then landscaped it with flowers and shrubs and erected a ten-foot-square granite monument, with "DODI" cut into a large polished headstone. But when he sought to buy surrounding plots to provide better security for the site, which was receiving hundreds of visitors each day, the owner demanded £500,000, a price he claimed was of the same rate but for more land. Al Fayed seemed to feel that there were people who were still trying to take a piece out of Dodi.

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TOMORROW

The fateful St Tropez holiday which began the romance: "I think your entire flock are hugely special," wrote Diana to Mohamed Al Fayed afterwards

Oh, no John: that shower's beneath you

Cool Britannia's ministers are on thin ice, says Magnus Linklater

Of course you have to feel sorry for Pauline Prescott. It must have been a nasty shock to be confronted suddenly by a bald-headed man in a leather miniskirt jumping on to your table and up-ending a bucket of icy water over your husband. My sympathy for John Prescott is slightly less immediate. Those who live by the slogan Cool Britannia must expect occasionally to be drenched by it.

Public figures with pretensions have always been targets for ritual humiliation. One might almost say it goes with the job. Those of us who naturally deplore the vulgar and mischievous hurling of projectiles such as tomatoes and rotten eggs cannot completely suppress a twinge of Schadenfreude when we see, say, Bill Gates of Microsoft receiving a faceful of custard pie, or Brian Mawhinney covered in red paint, or John Major dripping with egg-yolk.

In the case of the Deputy Prime Minister there was an extra dimension. This Government has made much of its image as an administration in tune with youth — open, unstuffy, free from the old constraints of class and convention. Cool Britannia was a phrase coined to show that restaurants by Terence Conran and dress designs by Alexander McQueen were synonymous with the new Britain, while pop groups like Oasis were invited to Downing Street to demonstrate, presumably, that despite their contempt for authority and their support for drugs, they too were part of this reinvented society.

It extended last week to the White House where Tony Blair and Bill Clinton won extraordinary write-ups as New Age politicians, whose appeal crossed generations and gender. A breathless editorial in the latest *New Yorker* has the film-maker Steven Spielberg remarking: "They both have that global, modern, international thing, and they can inspire people. Tony's people would kill for him." Mr Blair, says the same column, "has a kind of elfin glow. His slight figure and youthful purposefulness give him the air of a clever, unsullied younger cousin of Clinton's."

The ardent look that Cherie Blair shoots him still has the undergraduate complicity of "Darling, we made it, didn't we?"

Even allowing for the purple prose, there are dangers here. If the image begins to eclipse the reality, then reality, when it finally intrudes, may have all the effect of a douche of cold water. Wise politicians who make overtures to a younger generation — and of course they do it all the time — take care not to make themselves look ridiculous. Thus, Harold Wilson, meeting the Beatles, kept his pipe firmly clamped between his teeth. In those heady days of the 1960s, the tide of social change swept far faster than anything comparable today. "You either rode with it or you got out of the way," as one of the former

Prime Minister's aides recalled. But Wilson, while happy to benefit from the new mood, took care to distance himself from its wilder elements. As Ben Pimlott noted in his recent biography: "He did not identify with its aspirations. His own approach to sexual matters was puritan rather than libertarian; fashion in music, dress and art was beyond his understanding. Yet he sensed... that the tide could be harnessed to his advantage."

I doubt if Wilson would have sat through two and a half hours of deafening pop music, listening to bands he had scarcely heard of, to boost his image, or, as the Deputy Prime Minister's office put it, to "support the British music industry". Mr Prescott (and did I spot that well-known raver, the Defence Secretary, George Robertson, sitting beside him?) may well be up with the latest groups such as The Verve, Radiohead and Prodigy, but I was under the impression that his field was jazz. Not until the grizzled beards and bald pates of Fleetwood Mac took the stage at the end can he have felt at home.

By then, of course, he was drying out after the ice-bucket attack from Danbert Nobacon of the anarchist group Chumbawamba. The incident may have been a political statement or simply a publicity stunt, but either way it presented Mr Prescott with a dilemma. All his natural instincts, drawing on those stewarding days between decks, must have been to grab the bucket-wielding assailant by his designer T-shirt and thump him. "How's that for a bit of Chumbawamba," he might have muttered, as he straightened his tie and reached for the Newcastle Brown. But the need to stay cool, observe the Mandelson code, and remain on-message with the pop world, required him merely to grit his teeth and mop his dripping suit.

Only his statement, issued next day, revealed that the real John Prescott underneath had been changed at all. It was the Deputy Prime Minister said, "utterly contemptible that my wife and other womenfolk should have been subjected to such terrifying behaviour... Womenfolk is a wonderfully untrendy word."

Perhaps this episode will give ministers pause for thought. In some ways this is a fairly prudish Government. On drugs, sex and social morality it remains conservative, with its Home Secretary, Jack Straw, setting a tone which is the opposite of permissiveness. None of this sits easily with gauche attempts to demonstrate its hip credentials. The time has come, then, to switch off the strobe lights, button up the collar, and realise, regretfully, that it's time to go home. As for Cool Britannia, perhaps it should be quietly dropped. It could become every bit as embarrassing as a slogan for this administration as "back to basics" was for the last.

IRA IRAQ



"IF IT'S NOT ONE DAMNED THING... IT'S ANOTHER."

My role in Enoch's fall

I disliked the 'Rivers of Blood' speech — but I didn't tell Heath to sack Powell

For some decades after the event, Enoch Powell continued to believe that I had done him a serious political injury: indeed at one point in the 1980s he spoke of it in public. In April 1968 he made his speech in Birmingham about immigration. It was a weekend speech and I was in Somerset. Enoch believed that I had telephoned Ted Heath, who was then leader of the Opposition, and threatened to withdraw the support of *The Times* if he did not dismiss Powell from the Shadow Cabinet. Enoch attributed his dismissal partly to that threat.

How he came by this story I do not know; the truth was different and the story unlikely. I would have regarded it as absurd and improper to threaten Ted Heath and he would have become incandescent with rage if any editor had tried to do so. What happened was simpler. I telephoned a couple of members of the Shadow Cabinet to establish their reactions to the speech; they were Edward Boyle, who had been a friend from our Oxford days, and Reggie Maundling, who had worked with Enoch in the postwar Conservative Research Department. Both told me they would not be willing to continue to serve in the Shadow Cabinet with Enoch because they regarded the speech as racist. I subsequently learnt that Quintin Hogg, the Shadow Home Secretary, took a similar position, but I did not know that at the time.

I did then telephone Ted Heath, not to put my own view but to find out his; apart from the issue of race relations, this was obviously a major split in the Shadow Cabinet. Ted was his usual guarded self. I think he had decided how he was going to act, but quite properly, he was not telling me of a decision that he had not yet communicated to Enoch. I did eventually write a leading article for the *Monday*, which backed Ted's decision: it was headed "An Evil Speech".

Whether or not it was an evil speech, as many of us felt at the time, it was certainly a decisive one. I remember, much later on, Enoch saying, with some regret, that it had been the event which changed his career. Politically he never recovered. Were we right to repudiate his speech? In part, one could say that his argument carried the day. All governments since that time have been much more restrictive on immigration. Many people who would not have accepted it in the 1960s now agree that strict immigration control

is a necessary condition of good race relations.

The part of his argument which still seems to be wrong, and very dangerous, was his apparent belief that good race relations were impossible, because too many people of different racial groups had already come to Britain and because they were producing a disproportionate number of children. "I seem to see the Tiber foaming with much blood," he said. The Thames is not foaming with blood, 30 years later. It was characteristic of Enoch to utter a dire warning, which curdled the blood of

colleagues after he was elected. For his part, he loved the Commons. I first met him in 1954, at a reception to launch one of the pamphlets produced by the One Nation group. Even at that reception I remember him as rigorous, awkward, undebatable, taking me up rather sharply on some long forgotten remark which I had not intended to be a profound contribution to political thought.

In retrospect, his nationalism, like his attitude to immigration, seems partly right but seriously flawed. He saw, much earlier than most of us — though he, too, had changed his mind — the threat to British sovereignty of joining the European Community. But he seemed xenophobic, hostile to other European countries, hostile to immigrants, hostile to America. This tended to discredit arguments to which we should have attended more carefully. It was too easy for those who rejected his apparent xenophobia to dismiss his case entirely. In a world which has become more open in economic terms, the Europe of Maastricht is equally disliked by little Englanders, because it is too big, and by global free-traders, because it is too small. Enoch seemed to base his case on a narrow, if penetrating, view of Britain.

Nationalism and a classical free-market approach to economic policy were his two big ideas. They were not entirely compatible with each other. In the 1950s both seemed rather archaic, and were dismissed by young people as belonging to the Victorian age. Nowadays his nationalism is still under debate, and is still being rejected by British government; his free-market ideas have come to dominate world opinion. Those of us who have changed our minds from the Keynesianism of the mid-century to the free-market views of the 1990s owe Enoch an apology; he was right when we were wrong.

In particular, the Conservative Party owes his memory an apology for the events of January 1958, when Peter Thorneycroft resigned as Chancellor on the issue of public expenditure, and his two junior Treasury ministers, Enoch Powell and Nigel Birch, resigned with him. Harold Macmillan flew to Australia, referring to his Chancellor's resignation as "a little local difficulty". There were four occasions in the postwar period when the Conservatives faced the free-market option: in 1951 when Churchill decided not to appoint free-market Chancellor, Oliver Lyttelton, because he was too much of a City man; in 1958, when Macmillan repudiated his Chancellor, in the early 1970s, when Heath did his U-turn, despite Powell's protests, and in 1979 when Margaret Thatcher came to office. The first three times that the Tories had the chance, they fumbled it. Only on the fourth occasion did they take it. Enoch's arguments helped to give Mrs Thatcher her opening.

He helped, along with the speeches of Keith Joseph, to prepare the way for the revolution of the 1980s. One of the regrettable consequences of the Birmingham speech of 1968 was that it made the public think of Enoch as primarily concerned with issues of race, in a populist way. That weakened his advocacy of British independence relative to Europe, and his advocacy for the free market as well.

No one can say that Enoch Powell was not an influential politician. He did not have much of a career in government, but he had an impact on political history, particularly on the general elections of 1970 and 1974. But for him, the Heath period might not have happened, or might have been prolonged. He was a strategist of ideas, whose influence was most powerful during the Thatcher years.

After the events of 1968 in which I had done him some injury, and he thought I had done him a much greater one, we could never have become close. Indeed, he kept his reserve with all the contemporaries of his active period. Nevertheless we met from time to time in a perfectly harmonious way. He was a man who struggled with ideas and was loyal to them rather than to people, with the exception of his family. He did not seem to resent it when others behaved in the same way, coming to accept some of his ideas but continuing to reject others. I came round to Adam Smith, still in two minds about Kipling, but definitely reject Nietzsche. All three were essential parts of Enoch's intellectual furniture.

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Beethoven isn't for illiterates

No arts without the three Rs, insists

Chris Woodhead

Simon Rattle is right. Music matters. Children ought to be taught to sing, to play a musical instrument, to compose, and, above all, to appreciate classical music. It may not, as Alain de Botton argued on Monday, be possible to teach them to be creative, but they should be taught music. The real question, however, with regard to the school curriculum is what matters most?

A little honesty and realism is needed here. The original national curriculum went wrong because each subject enthusiast believed his subject was the most important and deserved more teaching than any other. The predictable result was that we ended up with a curriculum of renaissance richness which was, sadly, unteachable in the time available. In particular, primary headteachers argued that the national curriculum meant they no longer had time to teach basic literacy and numeracy properly.

Three weeks ago, David Blunkett, the Education Secretary, responded to their concerns. He did not say that music (or any other subject) should disappear from the curriculum. He was careful, in fact, to emphasise that schools must continue to teach music. What they do not have to do is to conform to every detailed requirement of every national curriculum subject. Headteachers have been given the freedom to judge how much music can be taught, given the demands of other subjects and the need to raise standards in basic skills. The intention is to reintroduce the national curriculum's music requirements in two years' time once the Government has reviewed the overall curriculum demands.

This is the reality of the Education Secretary's decision. It hardly amounts to the marginalisation of music. To portray it as an act of philistine indifference is simply silly; to imagine that headteachers across the country will drop music, art and drama is to underestimate their commitment to the arts as an essential element in every child's education. Mr Blunkett has responded pragmatically to a crisis and to the widespread expression of legitimate professional concern. He deserves credit, not criticism.

The crisis in our schools is in the teaching of the basic skills, not music. Two-fifths of 11-year-olds leave primary school unable to read well enough to cope with the demands of the secondary school curriculum. This is what matters most. This is the single greatest obstacle to our economic competitiveness and social cohesion as a nation. Ask any parent, teacher, or employer. The arts matter, yes, but in the end when the failed and choices have to be made can anyone disagree with this comment made by a primary headteacher: "If a child leaves my school unable to read, it is a pity. If he leaves unable to read, it is a tragedy."

To reject this as a crassly utilitarian argument is to dismiss the suffering caused by adult illiteracy and to ignore the obvious truth that a child who cannot read will find it impossible to make any real progress in the appreciation of great art. Pop music is immediately intelligible and instantly gratifying. Classical music is not. An appreciation of Beethoven necessarily demands an understanding of the cultural context in which Beethoven worked. If you cannot make sense of the relevant historical and literary texts, you will never understand or appreciate the Choral Symphony or the late quartets.

Whatever Sir Simon might believe, the position of secure. The real threat to the arts is the sad fact that too many children leave school illiterate.

For several years, inspectors have judged music to be the best taught subject in primary schools. There are problems, of course. A lack of continuity in pupils' experience of music may mean that children do not make the progress they should. The curriculum that pupils follow up to the age of seven or eight often focuses unduly on simply mechanical exercises that teach skills outside a musical context. Teaching in sixth forms can focus too sharply on the demands of examination papers.

These, though, are relatively minor matters. They are problems that committed professionals can and will solve. They should lead no one to the conclusion that music in schools trembles on the edge of extinction. If Sir Simon really wants to understand what is going on he should visit schools like Longmead Primary in Hillingdon where pupils are taught to listen to and analyse music from a range of times and cultures and where the standard of their compositions is exceptionally high. Or he might travel west to where, in addition to attending their class music lessons, children learn a wide variety of instruments.

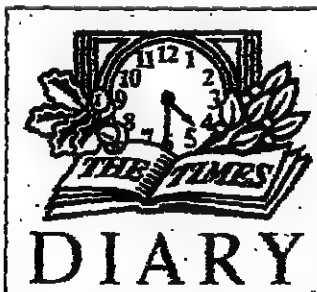
If the arts were under threat in our schools, I would be the first to join Sir Simon on the barricades. He has, however, misrepresented both the Secretary of State's intentions and the richness of work that is to be found in our schools.

The author is Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools

Stormin' Norm

BRITAIN'S favourite son, Norman Lamont, has been asked by William Hague to take his Eurosceptic crusade inside the citadel. The Tories now want the former Chancellor to go to Brussels as leader of their MEPs. It would be an extraordinary comeback: after defeat at the general election, he was overlooked by John Major for a peerage. He had stalked out of the Cabinet after refusing a demotion. Now Mr Hague is luring Mr Lamont back to the front line as he wants a senior — and sceptical — leader for the 1999 European Parliament elections. The duo's friendship dates from young William's period as PPS to Mr Lamont. "Norman would shore up the party in Brussels, which went native years ago," says a senior source. "He would enjoy getting stuck into those Eurocrats." Mr Hague remains an admirer. "Norman is much maligned," he says. "He took extremely brave decisions."

Edward McMillan-Scott, MEP, the pro-European Tory leader, sounds a little unsettled: "The leader needs to understand how Europe works. The Parliament is more consensual so Eurosceptics tend not to make much headway. I'm sure Norman can work with others, but which others? I have no plans to step down." Mr Lamont is considering the offer, which would let him take on such bruising opponents as Emma Bonino, the European Commissioner. He has visited East Anglia where he might



ended never to appear again," said a deflated source. "It is difficult for Tory grandees to forget they are no longer ministers," says MacShane.

Volume control

DURING slow overs in the Test series, John Major has started his memoirs. His target? 400,000 words. That dwarfs the literary efforts of his rivals. Alan Clark's *Diaries*, for example, only stretched to 150,000 words. "It's madness," says Ian Trevelyan, publishing director of Weidenfeld & Nicolson. "In a single volume it would run to over a thousand pages and retail at a prohibitive £30." Friends, I gather, are now urging the former PM to scale down his aspirations. One senior publisher, who prefers to remain

anonymous, said: "I am sure Foster took far fewer words."

THE Upper House is becoming carried away with talk of banishing hereditary peers. It has taken an ad in this newspaper for two secretaries for Black Rod — stating that "the House of Lords is an equal opportunities employer".

Spot on

HAVING proved his prowess in football, tennis and indoor bowls, the Australian sportsman, Ian



anonymous, said: "I am sure Foster took far fewer words."

Schuback has taken up archery. He recently found himself in Norfolk, where he started playing around with the available bows and arrows. The archery instructor, John King, was not impressed: "If you hit the apple," he told him, "I'll dance naked on the roof, singing Knock on Wood." Awkwardly, Schuback scored a bull's eye.

HAMPSTEAD Labour Party has chosen its candidate for the local elections: Mr Rudi Champagne (the "r" is silent).

Wooster boost

THE P.G. Wodehouse society will meet at the Savage Club next week. Star turns will be Ian Sproat, the former Heritage Minister, and that old thief Richard Briers. Sproat is an expert: he defended the writer against charges of treachery in *Wodehouse at War* and has just penned an entry for the *Dictionary of National Biography* on the author. The chairman of the society, Norman Murphy, says of the growing movement: "Americans dress up at meetings while tossing playing cards into top hats, striving to be Bertie Wooster."

AL GORE must be serious about running for President. So populist



Posh Spice: new American fan

is the once ponderous Vice-President becoming that he has learnt about the Spice Girls. His knowledge has grown so extensive that aides have dubbed him Vice Spice. Sadly the British girl will not be invited to do door knocking with Gore. "Did you hear what they did to Prince Charles?" he asked, referring to their over-familiar behaviour with the royal bottom.

JASPER GERARD

A DOCTOR

Progress depends on the quality of the education system. The quality of the education system depends on the quality of the teachers. The quality of the teachers depends on the quality of the training. The quality of the training depends on the quality of the curriculum. The quality of the curriculum depends on the quality of the research. The quality of the research depends on the quality of the funding. The quality of the funding depends on the quality of the government. The quality of the government depends on the quality of the people. The quality of the people depends on the quality of the environment. The quality of the environment depends on the quality of the climate. The quality of the climate depends on the quality of the weather. The quality of the weather depends on the quality of the sun. The quality of the sun depends on the quality of the stars. The quality of the stars depends on the quality of the universe. The quality of the universe depends on the quality of the God. The quality of the God depends on the quality of the love. The quality of the love depends on the quality of the peace. The quality of the peace depends on the quality of the harmony. The quality of the harmony depends on the quality of the unity. The quality of the unity depends on the quality of the justice. The quality of the justice depends on the quality of the truth. The quality of the truth depends on the quality of the wisdom. The quality of the wisdom depends on the quality of the knowledge. The quality of the knowledge depends on the quality of the understanding. The quality of the understanding depends on the quality of the perception. The quality of the perception depends on the quality of the observation. The quality of the observation depends on the quality of the investigation. The quality of the investigation depends on the quality of the analysis. The quality of the analysis depends on the quality of the synthesis. 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NO WAY OUT

A broken ceasefire must mean the expulsion of Sinn Féin

The killing of two men in the space of 24 hours by terrorists presumed to be republicans presents a challenge which the State cannot shirk. The first responsibility rests with the State's most important servant in the Province, the RUC Chief Constable, Ronnie Flanagan. Irrespective of the legal steps which will be taken to punish the culpable individuals there will be forensic evidence, from the weapons used, as well as other intelligence which will enable him to identify the organisations responsible for the murder of Robert Donagan and Brendan Campbell this week. If, as seems clear, the killings were the work of the IRA, whether operating under the *nom de guerre* of Direct Action Against Drugs or straightforwardly targeting a suspected loyalist terrorist, then Mr Flanagan's course of action will be grim, but straightforward.

If he is convinced that the IRA has broken its ceasefire then he must advise the Secretary of State that the Mitchell principles have been breached. His duty as the minister's principal adviser on security matters is unambiguous: he must unsparingly analyse the evidence and present her with a judgment on the IRA's operational activities. The political consequences of a broken IRA ceasefire are awful to contemplate, but the alternative is worse.

If Mr Flanagan believes that the IRA is responsible for murder, then Dr Mowlem must expel its political representatives, Sinn Féin, from the current talks. If the talks are to maintain any moral authority then those parties in breach of the Mitchell principles must bear the consequences. The Ulster Democratic Party was, rightly, expelled when the paramilitaries for whom it speaks, the Ulster Freedom Fighters, committed three repulsive sectarian murders. The Government must treat Sinn Féin and the IRA with the same firmness.

To expel Sinn Féin from talks might appear to imperil progress to peace. But no peace worth the name can be built while the IRA murder those who get in its way. How can democratic parties be expected to negotiate with organisations who are taking obstructions by killing them? If the Government does not stick by the Mitchell principles now, then what guarantee does any party have that the State will be firm in the face of violence in the future?

Sinn Féin insists it cannot be expelled because it has a mandate. But, as the former Taoiseach John Bruton has said in defence of the Mitchell principles, "the view that an electoral mandate is enough to exempt parties from them must be rejected out of hand".

Sinn Féin's negotiators have, throughout the talks, shown no interest in agreement. They have just said no. They have refused to contemplate the creation of a democratic assembly in Northern Ireland and refused to explain how the people of Ulster would then be represented on the north-south bodies they demand be created. Their stance is as logical as arguing for the creation of the Council of Ministers in Europe and the simultaneous abolition of Parliament.

Moderate nationalists have grown exasperated with Sinn Féin politicians' refusal to engage with a talks process that they clamoured to join. If republican inactivity at the talks table has been accompanied by military activity on the streets then that exasperation will turn to disgust. Progress towards agreement among democrats has only been impeded by republican negotiators striking impossible positions in talks. But their associates in the IRA, by committing murder, may in any case have made Sinn Féin's participation in talks at the moment impossible. Only by silencing their guns can republicans expect to be heard.

THE PRICE IS RIGHT

Inflation is on target and monetary policy working well

Britain now has the most transparent and accountable mechanism for making monetary policy in the world. Until yesterday, that statement was true in theory but had made little difference in practice. Now, with the publication of the minutes of January's Monetary Policy Committee, readers have a fascinating insight into the deliberations of the people who help to control the ebb and flow of the British economy.

For the first time, the committee was split. Five members wanted to keep interest rates level and three believed that they should rise. Surprisingly — and encouragingly — the inflation "hawks", who wanted higher rates, were not the career central bankers but the outsiders. When the Bank of England was granted independence, there was a fear that the Governor, Eddie George, and his directors would prove over-zealous in their battle against inflation, ignoring the cost to the real economy. In fact, Mr George and his three colleagues opposed raising rates in January.

Given the statistics that have since emerged, showing manufacturing output falling and inflation hitting its target for the first time since the election, the "doves" were clearly right. An interest rate rise would not just have been painful. It might actually have undermined the Bank's credibility, by causing unnecessary damage to British business, which is already struggling with a strong pound, competitive imports and price-resistant consumers.

Despite last month's restraint, the Bank predicts in its quarterly *Inflation Report*, also published yesterday, that rate rises may still be needed in the near future, even though the economy is turning down. Its economists argue that wages are rising rapidly, that inflation has been higher than expected and that all the external factors — such as the strength of sterling and the

prices of oil and commodities — are at present exceptionally favourable. These benefits may eventually be reversed.

Other favourable factors, however, could well come into play in the coming months. The Government's New Deal on employment, for instance, will feed more people into the labour market at a time when labour shortages are starting to emerge. This may, as the Bank acknowledges, help growth to continue without too much upward pressure on wages. Sterling may remain strong, which would help to restrain inflation. Over the past year, the Bank along with most City forecasters, has regularly predicted a weakening in the pound which has just as regularly failed to materialise.

The economy is clearly slowing down and, if the committee continues to make sound judgments, there is a good chance of the oft-sought but rarely achieved "soft landing". Usually in Britain, periods of rapid economic growth have been followed by excessive slowdowns and recession, when interest rates have been raised too far. If the Monetary Policy Committee keeps its nerve, it may be able to succeed where its political predecessors at the Treasury failed.

Disagreements among the members of the MPC are far from being a cause for criticism or alarm. They show that monetary policy has so far been quite successful at striking a balance between inflation and growth. If it were blatantly obvious which way interest rates should now go, that would suggest that the committee had either ignored signs of inflation for too long or that it had overreacted and pushed the economy into recession. As it is, the Bank maintains that "monetary policy is more finely balanced than at any time since 1992". This assessment seems about right — and is the best proof that Britain's new system of monetary management is working.

A DOCTOR WRITES...

Russia's progress depends on the health of Boris Yeltsin

One day he is so befuddled that he barely knows where he is or who is talking to him; the next he is full of energy and bonhomie, offering exuberant compliments at a state banquet on the beauty of Italian women. Keeping up with Mr Yeltsin's mood swings can tax even the most astute diplomat. Ron Ziegler, Nixon's hapless spokesman, had an easy job explaining Watergate by comparison with the press spokesmen clarifying Mr Yeltsin's remarks in Sweden that he was giving up nuclear weapons or his apocalyptic forecast of a third world war over Iraq.

As our medical correspondent, Dr Thomas Stuttaford, predicted over a year ago, a quadruple heart bypass operation can affect cognitive faculties. Before his operation Mr Yeltsin was becoming noticeably slower and more slurred. Since then, he has had a new rush of youth, appearing brighter, sharper and with a new eye for Latin womanhood. It can all be explained by medical science. His American doctors prescribed thyroid to make him more active, and the effect has been to awaken his senses in a way that has startled those around him.

Privacy and respect normally veil the ailments of the elderly. But the infirmities of presidents are invariably on display. Sometimes they are endearing: before he was ill, President Reagan himself made light of occasional confusion over where he was or whom he was meeting. Po-faced attempts to

maintain Brezhnev's dignity in his dotage became the stuff of a thousand Russian jokes. The "heavy cold" that Andropov suffered for more than a year gave Russia a new euphemism for a fatal condition.

Doctors, however, usually see through the gaps in terse bulletins and optimistic prognoses. At Andropov's funeral Dr David Owen met Chernenko and reported immediately that the new party secretary was suffering from severe emphysema and would probably not last for long. Nor did he. The Americans regularly employed teams of physicians to study films of remote, and officially robust, communist leaders, from Kim Il-Sung to Deng Xiaoping. Even today ambassadors are much more closely questioned by their bosses about the condition of the kings and presidents they meet than the information they impart.

Russians have learnt, often to their cost, that the health of their stock markets depends on the health of their leaders. Mr Yeltsin went on television to explain his need for a heart operation; he has been more reticent about his liking for vodka. After a remarkable recovery from major surgery, he has shown himself still a shrewd politician. The world has got used to his vagaries. And those that mock should remember that for every extra month that Mr Yeltsin remains in power, Russia becomes more prosperous, democratic and predictable.

Change to law on children's crimes

From Ms Fran Russell

Sir, Few people could have failed to be struck by the absurd picture of primary schoolchildren sitting in the Crown Court being tried for rape as if they were adults (reports and artist's impression, February 6). What is more disturbing is that new measures proposed by the Government will make such sights even more frequent for children charged with offences less serious than rape.

In its Crime and Disorder Bill the Government is planning to remove the important protection of *doli incapax*. Under this rule the trial of a child aged between 10 and 14 cannot go ahead unless the prosecution can show that the child understands the act concerned was "seriously wrong" and not just "naughty or mischievous".

The purpose of this rule is to recognise that children do not act with the same understanding and maturity as adults and may not therefore form the criminal intent necessary for a prosecution.

Children who commit crimes are usually damaged and complex. As is recognised by most of our European partners, whose ages of criminal responsibility are generally higher than ours, the criminal justice system is too blunt an instrument to deal with such children.

We need a new, non-adversarial approach which seeks to uncover the circumstances and nature of a child's offending behaviour and promotes ways of changing that behaviour rather than concentrating on punishment and criminalisation.

Yours faithfully,
FRAN RUSSELL
(Legal and Youth Policy Officer)
The Howard League for Penal Reform,
708 Holloway Road, N19 3NL
February 6.

Oxford exams

From the Dean of Lichfield

Sir, Having taught in different universities for twenty years, and having been a college chaplain for ten, I know all about the pressures of final examinations. However, the traditional Oxford system, scrutinised by the North commission (reports, article and leading article, January 29), has benefits which should not be ignored.

When a student prepares for several exams simultaneously things click into place in exciting ways. This seldom happens when producing a "term paper" on a single subject, mugged up and soon forgotten. Writing short exam answers under pressure prepares students for the "real world". Few employers want juniors who, given six weeks and a clear desk, can write a 30-page paper. They want a succinct summary, with salient arguments highlighted, by tomorrow.

In the present system, a student can have a bad term, or even year, for all sorts of reasons. They are not penalised. But grades awarded each term can remain on their record during graduate school and beyond. Many of our greatest scholars would never have made it through such an unforgiving system.

As far as I can see from your reports, the North commission has not addressed the biggest problem. Oxford courses, at least in the arts, were designed on the understanding that the greater part of each vacation was spent in reading texts. The reason tutorials often now become mini-lectures is that such reading is increasingly rare. Students have to rent rooms for the whole year, while the utterly inadequate grant-and-loan only covers terms; they must therefore take paid employment during vacations.

The only way that Oxford, and everywhere else as well for that matter, can retain standards is either by persuading the Government to reverse its policy on student finances, or by reinstating scholarships for those who need them, or by insisting that what previously took three years to teach will now inevitably take four.

Yours etc,
TOM WRIGHT,
The Deanery, The Close,
Lichfield, Staffordshire WS13 7LD.
tom.wright@virgin.net

Tunnel rail link

From Brigadier John Constant

Sir, The volume of air movements over southeast England is already causing concern to many of the air controllers, who fear for the safety of the millions of passengers in their care. Further increases are forecast, leading to a demand for yet another terminal at Heathrow.

As early as 1967, Mr Wilson's Government recognised the likelihood of these trends and the considerable cost they would impose on the national economy. As Mr Prescott considers the financial burden for the provision of a dedicated continental railway from London to Ashford now (letters, February 9), may we be assured that he has genuinely taken account of these and the mass of other indirect costs which will be triggered by any further delay in the provision of this link?

Yours faithfully,
JOHN CONSTANT,
(Head, Channel Tunnel Engineering, Ministry of Transport, 1968-71),
The River Cottage,
Coombe Road, Dartmouth TQ6 9PQ.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Intent and influence of Enoch Powell's 'rivers of blood'

From Mr C. Howard Wheeldon

Sir, One may take issue with Andrew Pierce (report, February 9) that "few if any" of the small audience which attended Enoch Powell's Birmingham "rivers of blood" speech in 1968 understood what he was talking about. As one who attended, there was no doubting the implication which ran through every word.

It was powerful stuff indeed. Neither was the actual audience shocked. It was an issue which, sooner or later, someone was bound to voice. Those who attended were all hardened members of the then Conservative Political Centre, a policy discussion group put together by Smith Square for ideas feedback.

By the time the meeting had commenced, in a small upstairs room at the Midland Hotel, there were as many members of the press in attendance as invited guests. The speech had been pre-released by Powell's office, as presumably Smith Square would not have sanctioned such a provocative line.

Looking back, it is fascinating to note what little hostility emerged from the audience. To the best of my memory, only one person voiced any sign of annoyance. If anything surprised, it was the timing of the speech. But then, Enoch Powell always had the power to choose the most inappropriate place and time to cover the most appropriate of central issues.

Powell's service to the Conservative cause was as a prophet. Like Boothby and years earlier, Churchill, he was an unpopular voice in a wilderness — a voice which could not be ignored.

Yours faithfully,
C. HOWARD WHEELDON,
18 Gastein Road, W6 8LU,
February 9.

From Sir Patrick Lawrence

Sir, Enoch Powell's speech at the Birmingham Conservative Political Centre (CPC) meeting is etched in my memory because halfway through the chairman (who is still a friend of mine) passed me a note demanding that I propose the vote of thanks. I believe that, in doing so, I managed to steer between the Scylla of enthusiasm and the Charybdis of discourtesy but it was not an occasion that is easily forgotten.

In fact, a copy of the speech was passed round at a private lunch immediately before the meeting. If reading it did not make me apprehensive, the appearance of TV cameras at the

meeting certainly did. Clearly someone else had seen the speech, which we in the CPC had thought was to be about a very different subject. But we understood it and were astonished by it.

Enoch Powell was, I am sure, trying to warn against a too speedy influx of immigrants of a different culture who would not easily be assimilated into the receiving communities. I am sure the speech was not about race *per se* and Powell's love of India and the Indian peoples points to my interpretation.

Nevertheless he did seem to delight on such occasions in not making himself clear to those who might approach his subject from a less intellectual stance. I am convinced he enjoyed creating a rumpus.

Whatever his faults, real or imagined, we have lost a great, patriotic Englishman.

Yours faithfully,
PATRICK LAWRENCE,
Beechcroft, 17 St George's Close,
Edgbaston B15 3TP,
February 9.

From the Reverend Canon Peter Clark

Sir, In 1968, at the time of the "rivers of blood" speech, I was a young priest working in Notting Hill. One of my tasks was to make welcome my many Caribbean parishioners, urging them to return to the Church so as to support their children whom I was then preparing for confirmation and first Communion.

I was much saddened that my fellow-Anglican, Enoch Powell (then a weekly communicant, so I understand), was striving to do the opposite, making them feel unwanted and unwelcome. I wrote to him twice to tell him how I felt. He never condescended to reply to me but did, I later discovered, write to my superior, the Bishop of London, urging him to rebuke me — a suggestion which was refused.

The irony is, as your obituary points out, that Powell "as Minister of Health... took a leading part in recruiting Caribbean immigrants for nursing and other hospital jobs".

I remain to be persuaded that Enoch Powell was not a racist.

Yours sincerely,
PETER CLARK
(Rural Dean of Battersea),
Christ Church Vicarage,
Candahar Road, SW11 2PU,
February 9.

Tesco's trees

From Mr Malcolm Oliver

Sir, Mr Tony Juniper of Friends of the Earth (letter, February 9) weakens his arguments by concluding with the oft-repeated but erroneous reference to the use of wood-based packaging.

If Tesco's packaging were based on hardwood, then Mr Juniper would have a point, as hardwood forests take generations to mature and are therefore often pillaged rather than managed. The softwood trees that go into packaging and paper mature much more quickly, and are farmed on a sustainable basis for long-term as well

as short-term profit. It is therefore nonsense to opine that reducing the consumption of these wood-based products would help to protect the world's forests.

Furthermore, young trees consume far more carbon dioxide, and recycle far more oxygen, than their more elderly companions, and are therefore much better in terms of inhibiting the greenhouse effect.

In forestry, at least, commercial euthanasia does have its benefits.

Yours sincerely,
MALCOLM OLIVER,
26 Green Lane, Purley CR8 3PG,
February 10.

Ministry map

From Dr A. S. Cook

Sir, Alarming evidence that the Ministry of Defence may still be gearing up to fight the Cold War: you feature George Robertson today (Valerie Grove interview), photographed in front of a map of Europe which shows two Germanies, East and West, an unfragmented Yugoslavia, and a prominent Union of Soviet Socialist Republics with a liner of pre-1990 SSRs.

Yours etc,
ANDREW S. COOK,
66 Compton Road, N21 3NS.
andrew.cook@btuk
February 11.

Collision course

From Captain K. M. MacKenzie, RN

Sir, Rear-Admiral J. F. Perowne, writing of the film *Titanic* (letter, February 7), is "amused" that on being given the order "full starboard rudder" the helmsman is shown as putting the wheel to port. This was, of course, the entirely correct procedure. The anomaly reflects the working of a boat steered by a simple rudder and tiller. If the tiller is put to port, the rudder and the boat's head go to starboard. When steering wheels were gradually introduced to handle bigger ships, the old convention was retained lest the change cause confusion. The practice of putting the wheel to port, to send the bow to starboard, was standard — for longer after this disaster.

It was not until the early 1930s that a worldwide convention was adopted to reverse the steering wheel connections of every ship's steering engine so that putting the wheel to port sent the rudder and the ship's head to port. The changeover was flawlessly accomplished throughout the world fleet — much to the surprise of many seafarers.

I enjoyed the film. I commend it.

Yours faithfully,
K. M. MACKENZIE,
MacKenzie Marine Limited,
34 Sachet Street (6F),
Piraeus 185 37, Greece,
February 8.

Welfare of hunted deer

From Dr C. B. Goodhart

Sir, Professor Patrick Bateson is no doubt right that "stag-hunting causes considerable suffering" (letter, February 6). But since the lives of most wild animals are all too often poor, nasty, brutish and short, is there any reason to think that hunting results in much more suffering to the stag than most of the other ways in which it can be expected to die?

Yours etc,
C. B. GOODHART,
Gonville and Caius College,
Cambridge CB2 3TA,
February 6.

From Commander Nick Messenger, RNR, Editor, Tall Ship International

Sir, I believe the misunderstanding concerning helm orders may have its origins in the film director James Cameron's misinterpretation of witness statements made at the time and subsequently published in contemporary accounts of the disaster.

It is my understanding that First Officer Murdoch, while ringing full astern on the engineroom telegraphs, shouted the order "Hard a starboard" to Quartermaster Hitchens, who promptly spun the wheel hard over.

"Hard a starboard. The helm is hard over, Sir," reported Moody, the sixth officer, who was standing immediately behind Hitchens — the order stemming from the early days of sail, when putting the helm to starboard caused the ship to turn to port.

For me, however, the film was spoilt much earlier on, when Captain Smith ordered "All ahead full!" (the American version) and not "Full ahead together!" (the British). Otherwise a splendid, epic movie.

Yours etc,
NICK MESSINGER,
Editor, Tall Ship International,
Guggleson Farm,
Sallbridge, Dorset DT10 2RQ,
nickmessinger@compuserve.com

Letters for publication may be faxed to 0171-782 5046.
e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

From Mrs Julian Sandys

Sir, The economy, Europe and immigration — three issues which Mr Enoch Powell thankfully had the courage to speak independently about at a time when the people of this country were beginning to despair. For a politician who served for only 15 months in the Cabinet over 37 years in the House of Commons, Mr Powell's legacy to this country is no mean achievement.

"Powellism" expounded the free market principles which were later so successfully put into practice by Mrs Thatcher that even the Labour Party has had to re-invent itself almost two decades later in order to become electable.

Who can say that the tighter immigration controls which took place following Mr Powell's much misunderstood and vilified speech in 1968 did not in fact prevent a possible fulfilment of his fears of future problems?

As for Europe, in the words of Michael Portillo in your columns (February 9), "Every argument worth making was made by Powell in speeches a quarter of a century ago". He is absolutely right and they are as valid now as they were then, but sadly only a handful were listening at the time. Many of these arguments merit reprinting over the coming months, for we ignore their wisdom today at our peril.

On a different note, I found Canon Eric James's letter (February 10) to be a monstrous departure from the respect and compassion due to a mourning family. Even in this "age of enlightenment" it is questionable whether a man of the cloth should ever reveal the confidences of others. That he should do so within 24 hours of the death of a confidant is despicable.

Yours faithfully,
ELISABETH SANDYS,
Charnwood, Shackleford,
Godalming, Surrey GU8 6AZ,
February 10.

From the Reverend John Fellingham

Sir, Sir Julian Critchley's ungenerous and inconsequential defence of Sir Edward Heath's lack of comment on the passing of Mr Enoch Powell (letter, February 10) makes me only the more thankful that Sir Edward for once kept silence.

I am, Sir, etc,
JOHN FELLINGHAM,
Fleeting Cottage, Anchor Corner,
Nr Atleborough, Norfolk NR17 1JX,
February 10.

Labour councillors

From Mr Bruce Kent

Sir, Reporting last night on the Prince of Wales's Asian tour, BBC news told us that the Kingdom of Bhutan "has no television but no democracy".

Such are the pros and cons of a modern day Shangri-La.

Yours sincerely,
B. H. PARKER,
Rook House, Victoria Road,
Dartmouth, Devon TQ6 9HD,
February 10.

Precocious view

From Mr John Tombs

Sir, Giving his "Snap Verdict" (New Movies, Arts, February 5), a 20-year-old describes the film *The Ice Storm* as "A brilliant look at suburban middle-class 1970s America."

How does he know?

Yours faithfully,
JOHN TOMBS,
79 Bull Lane, Newington,
Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 7LY.

Down at The Plough

From Sir Alan Munro

Sir, How much further can political correctness go? A recent Channel 4 documentary on agricultural machinery referred to "ploughpeople". Presumably every public house in the kingdom will now have to adjust its lunch menu.

Yours regretfully,
ALAN MUNRO,
Eynham House,
Chiswick Mall, W4 2PI,
February 6.

Out on a limb

From Mr Richard Ellis

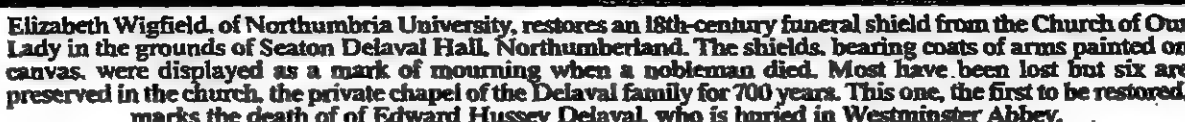
Sir, I read in the Business section of *The Times* today (later editions) that Body Shop has lost the head of its US arm. At this rate, will they soon be out of stock?

Yours faithfully,
RICHARD ELLIS,
11 Acacia Avenue, Wraybury,
Staines, Middlesex TW19 5HD,
February 10.

[illegible]

Museum, Lambeth Road, London SE1, to mark the publication of Mr Christopher Somerville's book *Our War*.

ST JAMES'S PALACE
February 11: The Prince of Wales this morning visited Tak Tsang Monastery, Bhutan.



Church news

Appointments
New Archdeacons of Buck-
ham, Oxford and Berkshire
Canon David Goldie, Vicar
Milton Keynes Christ the Cor-
nerstone, and Borough Dea-
con of Milton Keynes (Oxford)-
to be Archdeacons of Buck-
ingham (same diocese).
The Rev John Morrison, Arch-

The Rev Brian Benison, Vicar of Blyth St Mary (Newcastle):

The Rev Michael Buckley, Vicar, Earlestown St John the Baptist (Liverpool) to be Vicar, Great Sankey St Mary (same diocese).

The Rev Dr Arthur Cambingham, Curate, The Camels Parishes with special responsi-

Curate, (same diocese).

The Rev John Dray, Curate,
 Byland, Stranorhun, Newcastle
 to be Assistant, Curate,
 Culterston's Team (same
 diocese).
 The Rev Martin Evans, Curate,
 Marn, Morpeth (Newcastle);
 to be Chaplain to the Forces
 (Royal Navy).
 The Rev Ian Gaskell, Vicar,
 Birkenhead St. Paul,
 Hunsword, and Rural Dean
 of Birnall (Wakefield).
 Canon Residency of Wakefield
 Cathedral, and Bishop's
 Adviser for Social Responsibility (same diocese).
 The Rev Michael Kippman,
 Team Vicar, Woughton (Oxford);
 to be Rector, St. Margaret's
 (Truro).
 The Rev Susan Moth, Priestess

TRADE: 0171 481 1982
FAX: 0171 481 9313

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OBITUARIES

AIR VICE-MARSHAL IAN LAWSON

Air Vice-Marshal Ian Lawson, CB, CBE, DFC and Bar, AE, wartime bomber pilot and former Commandant of RAF Cranwell, died on January 22 aged 80. He was born on November 11, 1917.

In a 40-year aviation career which began with the biplane Tiger Moth and ended with the supersonic Concorde, Ian Lawson survived 82 bombing operations, and at 26 became one of the youngest group captains in the Royal Air Force. His early career as a bomber captain had its spectacular, not to say colourful, moments. Having successfully force-landed a Wellington bomber on a dried up watercourse in the Western Desert in 1941, he thereafter rejoined the RAF with the nickname "Wadi" Lawson.

Yet as a professional he was quietly spoken, tending to reticence. At the same time he was utterly unyielding on matters he felt deeply about. Indeed, he was squarely in the mould of Fighter Command's readfast and wise chief, Stuffy Dowding, victor of the battle of Britain, to whom he too bore a physical resemblance. When Lawson became senior officer, he treated his juniors as equals, and quickly won their loyalty, respect and affection.

Ian Douglas Napier Lawson was born in London, where he was educated at Brondesbury College. After completing his education at the Regent Street Polytechnic, he was employed in the design office of the de Havilland Aircraft Company, and in 1938 he joined the RAF Volunteer Reserve.

The outbreak of the Second World War found him, like many of his weekend flying contemporaries, semi-trained, with only 40 flying hours in his logbook. The desperate shortage of aircraft prevented further flying until the summer of 1940, when, as a sergeant pilot, he completed his training at Cranwell. He was then commissioned before assembling a crew at 1 Operational Training Unit at Bassingbourn, Cambridgeshire. In November they were sent to 24 Squadron, which was then based at Stretton, Shropshire, and equipped with Wellingtons.

They were a distinguished crew, who between them won DSO, four DFCs and four



mentions in dispatches. Such, however, was the cost in aircrew life of the five-year bombing campaign against the Axis powers that only Lawson and his navigator survived it.

Having qualified as bomber captain and completed 12 operations over Europe, Lawson and a new crew were sent to join the bomber force in the Western Desert. On March 15, 1941, three Wellingtons duly set out from Stretton, headed to arrive at first light at a position midway between Cap Bon and Malta to avoid the German fighters. After a ten-hour flight, Lawson landed on Malta to find that neither of the other air-

craft had got through: one had been shot down; the other had crashed in the Atlas Mountains.

With 148 Squadron in Egypt, Lawson and his crew completed 43 operations in eight months, including attacks on Tripoli, Benghazi and Derna, as well as operations in support of the campaigns in Greece and Crete, raids on Sicilian ports and one trip to Yugoslavia.

In December Lawson was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross. After a spell at HQ 205 Group, Middle East, he returned to operations in September 1942 as a flight commander with 70 Squadron. Here he flew another 26 operations, mainly in support of Montgomery's attack at El Alamein and his subsequent advance across Egypt and Libya. For this he received a Bar to his DFC and was moved to HQ 205 Group, Middle East, as group training inspector.

But his operational flying was not quite over. In August 1943 he returned to Britain to study the techniques being used by the Luftwaffe's bomber force, and to apply them to the RAF's own bombers. His 82nd and final operation was to Hanover in a Lancaster. It was his only sortie flown in a Wellington, an aircraft for which he retained

a lasting affection. Thanks to its gothic construction (the brainchild of Barnes Wallis) it had a legendary capacity to withstand punishment.

By October 1944 he was Group Captain in charge of Operations at HQ Mediterranean Allied Forces. He was three times mentioned in dispatches, and received the Air Efficiency Award and the US Legion of Merit. It was during this time that he met Flight Officer Bunty Nash of the WAAF. They were married in June 1945.

Given a regular commission, Lawson attended the RAF Staff College before reverting to his substantive rank of squadron leader; in common with most of his contemporaries, it was to be another 13 years before he regained his wartime rank.

During this time he had a number of squadron commands, interspersed with tours at the Air Ministry and a spell at the Joint Service Staff College. His logbook from this period charts the RAF's progress into the jet age: from Wellingtons, Dakotas, Lancasters and Mosquitos to Meteors, Vampires, Hunters, Canberras and the Comet.

After commanding RAF Lyneham and a tour in Aden as air commodore, in 1964 he returned to the RAF College Cranwell (which he had left as a sergeant-pilot in 1940) as Commandant. His joy in flying and kindly interest in the young made him a popular and respected AOC. His final posting was as Assistant Chief Adviser, Personnel and Logistics, at the Ministry of Defence. He was appointed CBE in 1961 and CB in 1965.

On his retirement Lawson joined the British Aircraft Corporation, with whom he spent the next decade, first as regional sales manager for Western Europe, then as director of marketing for the company's commercial aircraft division, and finally as chief sales executive of the Weybridge-Bristol Division. He was thrilled to be involved in the Concorde project.

Retiring finally in 1979, Lawson settled in Wiltshire, where he and Bunty made many friends. Despite his distinguished postwar service and civilian career, in latter years his thoughts returned increasingly to his experiences on bomber operations which he recalled with great clarity.

He is survived by his wife Bunty, a daughter and a son.

JAMES VILLIERS

James Villiers, stage and screen actor, died of cancer on January 18 aged 64. He was born on September 29, 1933.



SOMEHOW the name Villiers (which was his own) summed up James Villiers as an actor, with its associations at once aristocratic and raffish. He was one of those instantly recognisable characters who decorated the margins of British plays and films, without ever quite taking centre stage. Tall and slim, with a supercilious gaze and a phoney accent, he was perfect for a variety of roles, usually dislikable, from imperious army officers to sardonic bar-keepers, choleric squires and uppity academics.

When he first appeared on the scene in the mid-1950s, an actor who could play such roles with ease was much in demand, since the ground was littered with aspiring actors who could do to perfection the newly fashionable rough-

edged hero from the North or working-class London. By the same token, the sort of roles an aristocratic-seeming actor could expect were likely to be peripheral and generally subject to ridicule and contempt. This never seemed to worry Villiers: he rapidly found his niche and he remained in it throughout his career, happy to play the heavy straight or to enjoy the joke when he and all he represented were being cheerfully sent up.

Villiers's own background was very much that of the sort of character he played. Born and brought up in London, he went to Wellington College and then, having shone in amateur dramatics at school (where, as he liked to recollect, he made his debut in something called *The Crimson Cocoon*), he went on to train at RADA, and made his first professional appearance in 1953, playing William Blare in *The Ten Little Niggers*.

By 1955 he had made it to the Old Vic company, playing minor characters such as Antenor in Tyrone Guthrie's modern-dress production of *Troilus and Cressida* and Bushy in *Richard II*. In these two roles he took part in the Old Vic's North American tour of 1955-56. He then did a stint with the English Stage Company at the Royal Court, appearing in Nigel Dennis's satire *The Making of Moo*, among other things.

His first West End role

came in 1960, in *Tomorrow With Pictures*, an effective melodrama co-written by John Osborne's friend and erstwhile collaborator Anthony Crockett, and he went on to play substantial roles in traditional West End plays such as *Write Me a Murder* and *The Burglar*. But during the 1960s and early 1970s he was mainly occupied with films and, to a lesser extent, television.

In films he began with an interesting spread of projects, ranging from *Carry on Sergeant* to *The Entertainer*, and often found himself working with distinguished directors such as Joseph Losey (on *The Damned and the Deserted*) and Roman Polanski (*Repulsion*), as well as in Miss Marple vehicles such as *Murder at the Gallop*. On television he came nearest to stardom playing Professor Higgins in a production of *Pygmalion*, though he was more likely to turn up as one of the team in such series as *The Sword of Honour* (in which he played Lord Kilbarnock) or *The First Churchills* (in which he was Charles II).

Another high-point in his career was appearing as Victor Fyrrne, the rather thankless role first played by Laurence Olivier in the original production of *Private Lives* alongside Noël Coward and Gertrude Lawrence, whose roles in the 1974 production at the Queen's were played by Robert Stephens and Maggie Smith. In this sparkling com-

pany he more than held his own. Inspiring one critic to observe that he was a great improvement on Olivier. In 1974 he played Belcredi in Giraudello's *Henry IV* opposite Rex Harrison in the title role, and later the same year he brought one of his best comic performances, Philip in André Roussin's *The Little Hut*, to the West End after first playing it at the Oxford Festival. In 1976 he was back at the Old Vic playing in the improbable but characteristic combination of *The White Devil* and *The Ghost Train*.

More recent stage appearances included doubling Captain Hook and Mr Darling in *Peter Pan*, *The Madness of George III* at the National Theatre and Mr Brownlow in the last revival of *Olivier!* at the Palladium. Films included *The Ruling Class* with Peter O'Toole, the Bond spectacular *For Your Eyes Only*, John Huston's *Under the Volcano* and Bob Rafelson's *Mountains of the Moon* — not to mention an appearance as one of the shadier customers of the funhouse in *Scandal*. On television he was Buster Fox in *A Dance to the Music of Time*.

Villiers was a busy actor throughout his career, enjoying to the full the advantages of the character actor, who often proves more durable than the leads in whose shadow he often lurks. He was twice married, to Patricia Donovan and to Lucy Jex, who survives him.

PROFESSOR WILLIAM WALKER

William Walker, former Professor of Haematology at Newcastle University, died on January 22 aged 79. He was born on January 18, 1919.

WILLIAM WALKER was a pioneer in the treatment of rhesus haemolytic disease of the newborn. In the 1940s, more than 500 British babies a year died from this, and many more suffered brain damage. Two years before Walker qualified as a doctor, the rhesus blood group factor was identified, and he duly became an expert in the technique of exchange transfusion. This is the process by which blood damaged by the mother's rhe-

sus antibodies is gradually removed and replaced by blood from a donor.

Recognising the importance of proving the value of the technique, Walker embarked, with Pat Morrison, on one of the first widespread randomised controlled trials. This was pioneering research, 30 years before randomised trials were generally accepted, and it often met with scepticism from his medical peers.

Having proved that exchange transfusion could save lives and avoid devastating brain damage, Walker went on to refine the technique in Newcastle, at the Princess Mary Maternity Hospital. At one time he was personally carrying out more than 200

such procedures a year — as well as keeping the staff in the newborn nursery entertained with his repartee.

From his research it appeared that the results of exchange transfusion were more satisfactory in Newcastle than elsewhere, and this persuaded the Chief Medical Officer, Sir John Charles, to allow Walker unprecedented access to the death certificates of all babies dying from haemolytic disease. Using this information he was soon able to demonstrate that treatment in special centres by dedicated staff gave the best chance of survival. Although cases of rhesus disease do still occur, modern treatment is largely based on Walker's work.

William Walker was born and educated in Consett, Co Durham, the youngest of four children. He was the first of his family to choose medicine as a profession, qualifying from Durham University in 1942. The direction of his career was determined by his first posting, as house physician to Tom Boon and James Spence Boon was to be part-time director of the wartime blood transfusion service, and Spence was to be England's first professor of child health, and thus haematology and paediatrics became Walker's life.

Following this appointment, Walker joined the Army and saw service in Europe with a light field ambulance, helping

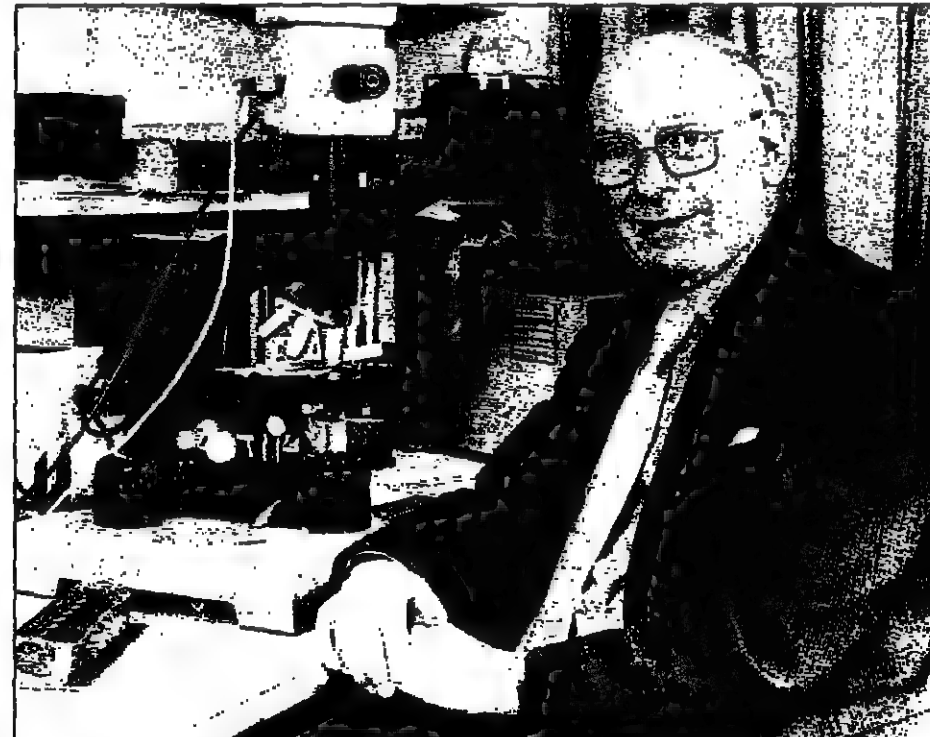
to train his section in transfusion. He was then posted to the Army transfusion headquarters in Bristol, and on to the Far East.

After the war he returned to Newcastle as a lecturer and then reader in child health. In 1948 he contributed to *The Lancet*, describing a novel technique for using polythene tubes in blood transfusion, as a new standard practice. This was an early demonstration of his ingenuity and practicality. In the late 1950s he began to care for children with leukaemia, again recognising the need for specialist expertise.

In 1972 he was encouraged to apply for the newly established post of haematologist to the Royal Victoria Infirmary, and over the following 12 years he took great pride in establishing a model service for the hospital and in establishing links between haematologists throughout the region.

Walker was a stimulating teacher who made frequent use of the most unconventional visual and other aids. With his friend George Twichet he also organised coach tours for his department of far flung parts of Northumbria. A full evening usually culminated in country dancing. In later years he helped to found the Haematology Travellers, a social club with a strong academic content that continues to thrive.

Although of robust health, he was a dedicated hypochondriac, often sitting for hours at his microscope with a thermometer in his mouth. He



had a great capacity for selective friendship, and took pride in talent-spotting among younger colleagues. This also extended to matchmaking, and he claimed at least two successful marriages to his credit.

His own wedding, to June, a week after her graduation, led to 47 years of very happy life, enriched by Scottish country dancing, gardening and travel. He is survived by her and their three sons and a daughter.

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THE TIMES

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BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 12 1998

Bank believes rates need to rise

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS EDITOR

THE Bank of England yesterday surprised the City with a hawkish quarterly *Inflation Report* which said that it was more likely than not that interest rates would have to rise again.

It also emerged that the Bank's Monetary Policy Committee split on interest rate policy in January for the first time since Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, set it up in May. The pound responded by rising sharply on the foreign exchanges, climbing 3.41 pence to DM2.9718 and 0.81 cents to \$1.6324.

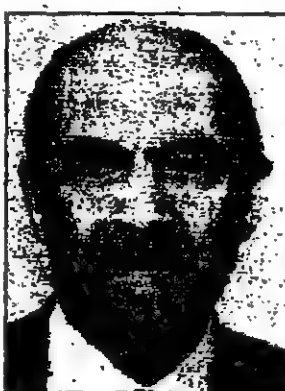
The minutes of the January meeting of the MPC showed that five members of the committee voted against a rate rise with three — Alan Budd, Charles Goodhart and William Buiter — voting in favour of tighter money. The MPC also met last week and again opted to leave base rates unchanged. The minutes of that meeting appear on March 11. The City had expected a

softer tone in the *Inflation Report* which came the day after unexpected news that underlying inflation had fallen to the Government's target of 2.5 per cent in January for the first time since May.

The RPI figures were not available when the *Inflation Report* was written, but Mervyn King, head of economics at the Bank, said that they would not have made any difference to the views expressed in the report.

The Bank's expectations for inflation have, if anything, deteriorated slightly since November despite growing evidence that the pace of economic growth is now slowing and despite the deepening of the crisis in Asia.

The Bank's main worry appears to be that continuing falls in unemployment will put further upward pressure on wage settlements. Mr King said that the Bank was not so much worried about the current rate of earnings growth



Alan Budd, left, Charles Goodhart, centre, and William Buiter wanted rates to rise



but was concerned about any acceleration.

Figures published yesterday showed that average earnings growth remained unchanged from November's rate of 4.75 per cent in December. The Bank has argued that average earnings growth would have to fall to 4.5 per cent to be consistent with the Government hitting its inflation target in the longer term.

Separate earnings data due

to be published next week by Industrial Relations Services, whose figures are used by the Bank, will show no acceleration in wage settlements last month.

IRS said yesterday that January settlements, about a fifth of all settlements, were running at 3.6 per cent, the same as in December.

IRS also noted that the fall in headline inflation in January to 3.3 per cent would help to keep a lid on pay settlements in the

months ahead. Wage negotiators tend to use the headline rate as a benchmark.

Mr King yesterday acknowledged that monetary policy was now more finely balanced than at any time over the past five years, with the strong pound restraining growth while the domestic economy was buoyant.

Leading article, page 21
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UNEMPLOYMENT DOWN TO 5% OF WORKFORCE

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY AND JANET BUSH

BRITISH headline unemployment fell by 12,300 in January to 1,399 million, the lowest level for 18 years, according to figures released yesterday by the Office for National Statistics. January's decline took unemployment to 5 per cent of the workforce.

However, the figures suggest the pace of job creation is slowing. In December, headline unemployment fell by 29,100. In addition, January's figures showed a fall of 12,400 in unfilled vacancies at job centres.

The news coincided with the Government's launch of an £8 million advertising campaign to promote its Welfare to Work programme for young people. The campaign, which will run for more than three weeks, comes as the

jobless figures show there are only 118,000 young people eligible for the New Deal. The Government had set a target of finding work for 250,000 young people.

The campaign, launched yesterday by Tony Blair, David Blunkett and Andrew Smith, will target employers to encourage more involvement by companies. So far about 30 of the top 50 companies have joined the scheme, with around 700 businesses participating overall. The scheme started in 12 pilot areas last month.

The Department for Education and Employment said that although there were only 118,000 young eligible people without work, more than 15,000 each month became qualified for Welfare to Work.

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET

FTSE 100	5807.9	(-5.4)
Yield	2.90%	
FTSE All share	2604.55	(-1.23)
Nikkei	Closed	
New York		
Dow Jones	8291.28	(-4.23)*
S&P Composite	1017.72	(-1.28)*

US RATE

Federal Funds	5 1/8%	(5 1/8%)
Long Bond	103 3/8%	(102 1/4%)
Yield	5.88%	(5.92%)

LONDON MONEY

3-mth Interbank	7 1/4%	(7 1/4%)
Libor long gilt	124	(123 1/2)

STERLING

New York	1.6328*	(1.6267)
London		
\$	1.6327	(1.6243)
DM	2.9723	(2.9379)
FF	8.9525	(8.8525)
Sfr	2.3917	(2.3722)
Yen	201.81	(200.47)
£ index	104.4	(103.4)

DOLLAR

London		
DM	1.8180*	(1.8068)
FF	6.0840*	(6.0590)
Sfr	1.4527*	(1.4511)
Yen	123.40*	(123.28)
£ index	108.1	(107.8)

Tokyo close Yen Closed

Brent 15-day (Apr)	\$16.15	(\$15.26)
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GOLD

London close	\$298.85	(\$299.85)
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* denotes midday trading price

Business to get key role in forming regulation

By ALASDAIR MURRAY

THE Government is looking to appoint a panel of businessmen to scrutinise and comment on legislation before it becomes law as part of its drive towards improving the quality of regulation.

The initiative, which has won the support of the Cabinet Office and the Department of Trade and Industry, is one of a number of deregulation measures the Government is planning.

Informal meeting of internal market ministers in Cambridge this coming weekend. British businesses have long complained about poorly framed European legislation hampering competitiveness. The problem is often made worse when legislation is translated into national law.

The new panel of businessmen will examine legislation which is likely to affect the corporate sector and try to iron out any potential glitches before it becomes law.

Mr Clark agreed before Christmas with his Austrian and German counterparts to make deregulation a central theme of the next three European Presidencies. The European Commission already has a plan in action to simplify existing regulations. However, the Cabinet Office and DTI are looking to accelerate this process as well as to try to establish a common code of best practice for European countries to draw on when framing legislation.

The latest initiative has been inspired by the Better Regulation Task Force, established by the Government to try to improve the quality of regulation and cut red-tape. The task force, headed by Chris Haskins, is also working on a code of practice for new domestic regulations and has pushed for deregulation measures in the leisure sector.

Commentary page 27

Sotheby's internal inquiry cost £7m

By DOMINIC WALSH AND DALYA ALBERGE

SOTHEBY'S HOLDINGS, the auctioneers, yesterday revealed that its internal investigation into allegations of art smuggling cost \$11.7 million (£7.2 million).

The figure, revealed in the company's 1997 results, is listed as a non-recurring charge resulting from a review of "company policies and practices relating to the conduct of our auctions and compliance with import-export laws and regulations". The charge meant that net income dipped from \$40.95 million to \$40.61 million.

The company also said that Kevin Bousquette, executive vice-president and chief operating officer, would be leaving at the end of April to pursue "personal and private interests". Observers dismissed any suggestion that his departure was connected with last year's investigation. He will receive no payoff.

Mr Bousquette, 40, who previously worked for Kohlberg Kravis Roberts, the New York investment firm, told *The Times* that he was planning to take advantage of the "good luck" he had enjoyed on Wall Street by joining "the 35 per cent of the population who do not work".

Diana Brooks, president and chief executive officer of Sotheby's, said: "Kevin has been a terrific colleague and a very strong executive over the past five years."

Ms Brooks said that, excluding the charge, full-year net income of \$48 million was the highest achieved since 1990.



Michael Green is concerned over large fees for matches

Carlton warns on football costs

By JASON NISSE

THE increased cost of carrying live football on television will hit profits at Carlton Communications, the owner of two ITV franchises, its chairman, Michael Green, said yesterday.

Mr Green told the company's annual meeting that "the seasonal effect of more football will impact profits on the first half". ITV will be carrying live coverage of FA Cup games as well as the UEFA Champions League and the Coca-Cola Cup final in the next few weeks.

Carlton is concerned that it has to pay large fees for these matches — up to £1 million a game spread across ITV — without any certainty of re-

couping this fee through increased advertising income.

ITV has been forced into increased payments for games because of competition from BSkyB, which is 40 per cent owned by News International, owner of *The Times*, and Channel 5.

Mr Green said advertising revenue from ITV was recovering after the initial impact of Channel 5. He expects the British Digital Broadcasting joint venture with Granada, to be launched this year, to "become the leading platform for multi-channel TV in the UK". Carlton shares slipped 1/4p to 499 1/2p.

Tempus, page 28

Monsoon fall

Monsoon joined the ranks of London's least successful market debutantes after its shares slid 6 1/2p to 191 1/2p after opening — wiping an instant £11.6 million from its market value. The fashion chain, whose founder Peter Simon has already made \$84.7 million in cash from flotation, saw its shares at 189p at one point, but recovered to settle with a value of £340 million. Commentary, page 27



Simon chairing meeting

ing at the top of its agenda during the British Presidency of the European Union.

David Clark, the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, will discuss the idea with his European counterparts at the informal EU ministers meeting next month. Lord Simon of Highbury, Minister for Trade and Competitiveness in Europe, will also be raising the issue when he chairs the

Chairman Sugar scores a hat-trick

By JASON NISSE

ALAN SUGAR yesterday became executive chairman of his third public company when he took the reins of Viglen Technology, the personal computer maker whose shares have virtually halved since it was demerged from the old Amstrad last summer.

He is already chairman of Tottenham Hotspur football club and the new Amstrad, the fresh name for Betacom, the consumer electronics group.

The old Amstrad, which Mr Sugar created in the 1980s, was broken up last year and all that remains is a vehicle called Amstrad, which is pursuing two legal actions against suppliers to old Amstrad. Mr Sugar acted in an attempt to stem the decline of Viglen's shares, which have fallen from a peak

of 86 1/2p to just 34 1/2p yesterday, having slipped 3p in response to the news.

Viglen, which is expanding in computers for schools, said that it hoped to capitalise on Mr Sugar's increased involvement in education. He has been asked by Gordon Brown and Geoffrey Robinson to sell entrepreneurship to schools and colleges. Borden Thachuk, Viglen's chief executive, said: "Alan will have a role in guiding the company."

Viglen's maiden results yesterday showed profits falling because of a collapse in retail PC prices. Pre-tax profits for the six months to December 31 were £2.25 million against £5.13 million. Earnings were 1.27p and the dividend is 0.4p.

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IT shares slump on JBA profit warning

By MARTIN BARROW

LONDON'S new information technology sub-sector, which has raced ahead since its Stock Exchange launch on January 2, suffered its first major setback yesterday when a profit warning by JBA Holdings triggered a sharp fall in leading IT stocks.

Shares of JBA slumped from £12.57p to 632 1/2p in just 30 minutes after the company, which supplies business software and support services, said pre-tax profits would be £5 million for the year to the end of December, against the £16.6 million forecast by analysts. The fall wiped £28 million from the company's market value.

Other IT shares slumped in response. Misys, tipped to become the first IT stock to join the FTSE 100, fell

45p to £21.95. Logica fell 45p to £13.15. Micro Focus 165p to £29.32p and MMT Computing 35p to 55p.

JBA, whose shares had risen 28 per cent since early December, blamed the profits shortfall on the failure to win a number of large tenders in an area outside the company's normal area of expertise in clothing, automotive components and drinks.

Alan Vickery, chairman and chief executive, said: "It was an error on my part. I asked the board to approve additional expenditure based on tenders we subsequently failed to win."

Mr Vickery is the company's principal shareholder, with a 13 per cent stake. The company said total dividend for 1997 will now be held at 5.1p a share.

Tempus, page 28

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COMMENTARY

by our City Editor

The Bank of England's latest Inflation Report reads like a charter for higher interest rates. Yet the Monetary Policy Committee, which is now deeply involved in its drafting, has chosen not to act on its own analysis.

How cheering to find that the MPC may be sceptical about putting too much emphasis on what the economists say, even if they constitute the economists in question!

At its meetings in January and earlier this month, the MPC opted not to raise rates although the newly published minutes prove the committee was split five to three in January.

Mervyn King explained that there is no mechanistic link between the conclusion of the Inflation Report, which said that the odds were on a further rate rise and that the risks in the inflation target were on the upside, and policy decisions.

That may sound like the logic of Alice in Wonderland but it is actually heartening that the Bank is exercising discretion, given the enormous uncertainties of the current economic outlook.

For long-time observers of the Bank, it has come as a refreshing surprise that the most open minds reside within the institution itself, not among the outside economists brought in by Gordon Brown to balance the "inflation mutters" of Threadneedle Street.

The minutes of the January meeting showed that only one of

the outside voices — Deane Julius — voted against a rate rise with four Bank staffers. The three members who voted to tighten rates were all outsiders.

The only way to square the hawkish central message of the Inflation Report with inaction on interest rates is the level of uncertainty facing the MPC. The economy is very difficult to read because there is a huge difference between the domestic scene and the international scene.

Domestically generated inflation is, as Mervyn King pointed out, running at more than 3 per cent with considerable strength still evident in services and in consumer demand.

But this is being offset by considerable pressure on the tradable goods or international sector of the economy, with the strong pound making life difficult for exporters and depressing import prices.

In a nutshell, the Bank is worried that inflationary pressures being generated at home are being masked by the impact of a one-off fall in import prices because of the exchange rate.

Making the MPC's job even harder is the imponderable of Asia's impact on Britain and the rest of the world. The Bank's best

guess is that the crisis in the Far East will shave up to 0.5 per cent off British growth over the next two years, with most of the impact coming in the first year, but it could be considerably worse.

For all its talk of upside risks to inflation, the Bank is clearly conscious of the possibility that a slowdown could be reinforced and deepened by events in the Far East. They just don't know, but at least they are admitting as much.

Sugar teaches Gates a lesson

Alan Sugar is an unstoppable salesman. He has never been too proud to admit that he began to build his fortune by touting his wares from the back of a van, when he hit multi-millionaire status he did not slip into smooth corporate executive mode: he remained a salesman.

So when Tony Blair made Mr Sugar his special envoy of entrepreneurialism to the nation's youth, there were a few eyebrows raised. Some of those will reach hairlines this morning as their owners learn of the comments of Mr Sugar's associate, Michael Beckett. Mr Beckett is stepping aside as chairman of Vigen Technology to enable its principal shareholder, A Sugar, to assume that role in a determinedly executive manner. Beckett, who will remain on the board, is excited about the prospects for this latest incarnation of Amstrad, which markets computer hardware and software. In particular, he is very excited about the outlook for Vigen's education division.

Yes, Vigen has just started selling to schools. Mr Beckett is unabashed in explaining the logic of the move. Citing Mr Sugar's role in the Government's "Young Enterprise" initiative, he says: "Through this, he believes

he is well positioned to help develop the company's public sector and education business."

Of course. And that does not mean that he will not be offering the schools the best possible deal with his new "Classlink" software. Bill Gates dreamed of cornering the British schools market but it seems that the wily Sugar may be able to show the Microsoft boss a trick or two.

Mr Sugar's involvement with educational establishments promises to be as enlightening for him as for the pupils he addresses. And who should complain if these arrangements are beneficial for both sides?

But with the Government intent on involving more and more business people in the workings of the administration, it is perhaps worth pointing out that many of those who succeed in commerce share Mr Sugar's natural instincts.

The latest wheeze is that panels of business leaders are to be

established to cast their eyes over proposed legislation before it hits the statute books. An admirable idea but let no one be surprised if a certain amount of vested interest colours the debate. Do tobacco manufacturers believe a ban on tobacco advertising to be fair and just?

Do fat cats vote for an enforced reduction in their cream intake?

Insider feeling at Monsoon

Peter Simon can afford to shrug off the negative reaction to his company's Stock Market debut. Having cashed in almost £85 million of his Monsoon shares, a few pence off the value of the remaining 128.2 million should not be too agonising. But if the pessimism of some of his staff is any indication, there could be worse to come: 25 out of the 400 Monsoon staff who had said they would subscribe for options have now decided against.

Why do those insiders not share the enthusiasm of sponsors NatWest Markets for the issue? Perhaps they are concerned about the further scope for growth in a business which has,

admittedly, had great success in proving that the ethnic look did not die with the 1960s.

Maybe they share with some in the City the lingering unease over Monsoon's ownership structure. This scuppered the original plans for flotation a couple of years ago, when Mr Simon and his advisers remained disconcertingly coy over the nature of the Maltese trusts which held the majority of the shares. That has since been cleared up with, surprise, surprise, Mr Simon and his family emerging as the owners of virtually the entire company, through the tax efficient intermediary of Credit Suisse.

Or might it be that the wary staff spotted an unenviable omen on their board, in the shape of non-executive director Graham Searle? Mr Searle was chief executive of Laura Ashley Holdings in 1995?

Severed relations

AS THEY take their final curtain calls at Shandwick, the departing executives are collecting handouts that would not disgrace a diva. Now Lord Chadlington is able to devote himself completely to the PR firm after exiting the chairmanship of the Royal Opera House. Gerald Kaufman's report on the ROH was scathing of Chadlington and his board and intimated they could not run a puppet theatre, let alone an opera house. That's Shandwick's gain.

Computer duo in \$9bn hostile takeover battle

FROM OLIVER AUGUST IN NEW YORK

A RARE hostile takeover bid is set to accelerate the consolidation process in the computer industry. Computer Associates International yesterday offered \$9 billion (\$5.4 billion) for Computer Sciences Corporation.

Together the two American companies would be a serious rival to IBM in the area of installing and maintaining computer networks. Merger talks between the companies failed to reach agreement.

Computer Associates is offering \$108 cash per Computer Sciences share, paying a premium of 17 per cent on Tuesday's closing price. Computer Sciences shares jumped 23 per cent and Wall Street expects that Computer Associates will have to raise its bid.

The combined companies would have revenue of about \$11 billion. Computer Associates said, Unicom, the Computer Associates arm, is the third-largest software group behind Microsoft and Oracle.

Charles Wang, founder and chairman of Computer Associates, said: "The proposed combination of CA and CSC would create the next-generation, world-class information technology services provider that will lead our industry into the next millennium."

Computer Associates said it had obtained financing commitments for the deal, and intended to retain all Computer Sciences employees.

The rationale for the bid is believed to be that software houses such as Computer Associates need service arms to turn themselves into one-stop shops. The service sector has margins of about 20 per cent, while software offers margins of about 90 per cent.

John Faig, an analyst at PaineWebber, said: "It makes a lot of sense for software and service to get together. Selling software is less dependent on features and more dependent on the ability to install it in a timely fashion."

Industry consolidation had gathered pace with the \$9 billion acquisition of Digital by Compaq a fortnight ago.

Shandwick board shake-up

BY DOMINIC WALSH

DERMOT McNULTY, chief executive of Shandwick International, has been ousted as part of a massive shake-up aimed at reviving the public relations firm's fortunes.

Lord Chadlington, chairman, said recent talks with third parties over the taking of a substantial minority stake or an outright takeover were unaffected, and would be concluded "in weeks not months".

The shake-up will mean a new focus on two global brands, Shandwick and Golin/Harris, the US firm acquired in 1993. The listed holding company will be known as International Public Relations.

The news came as Shandwick unveiled a dip in pre-tax profits from £9.2 million to £9 million in the year to October 31 after a £900,000 hit from starting. Fee revenues rose 11 per cent in constant currencies to £125.8 million. Earnings per share were 4.7p (4.9p) and the final dividend of 1.21p, payable on April 22, makes 1.64p (1.43p).

MBO talks break down at Ronson

BY FRASER NELSON

THE future of Ronson lay in the balance last night after the cigarette lighter manufacturer said takeover talks had broken down — making an emergency fundraising programme its only option.

The company, which is still fighting a £500,000 lawsuit from Howard Hodgson after dismissing him as chief executive, will tomorrow detail a rescue package assembled by Albion Consortium, its main shareholder.

Shawn Dowling, chairman, said that a management buyout team had been rejected after their offer failed to win enough support from Albion and other institutional shareholders.

He said: "A number of shareholders would prefer a refinancing to an MBO. Those are certainly the indications we've had so far." He said there are no plans to take the company private.

The shares, which once traded at 65p, were unchanged at 64p yesterday.

Chesterton agrees to reverse takeover bid

CHESTERTON International, the troubled quoted surveying firm, has agreed to a reverse takeover by The Summit Group, a private facilities management company (Carl Morrishead writes).

The deal would leave Chesterton shareholders with 40 per cent of the merged group and on the basis of yesterday's 37p market price would capitalise the group at about £70 million.

Michael Holmes, who will remain chief executive of Chesterton, said that the new

group would seek to serve a growing number of clients wishing to outsource real estate, facilities and information technology.

The Summit Group, run by Kit Hunter Gordon who will become executive deputy chairman, provides financing and support for organisations seeking to outsource property and equipment. Summit Group had net assets of £42.6 million and £26 million in cash last March. The surveying firm incurred losses of £7 million last year.

New job-growth survey highlights CNT towns.

Room to spread helps create job opportunities

By Brian Gosson

Cities and towns with well educated workforces and room to spread the best at creating jobs, says a report which points to the challenges facing the government's planned regional development agencies.

Three leading such agencies have a difficult task, according to business strategists, the economic consultancy, which investigated employment growth between 1987 and 1992 in 11 towns and cities outside London.

Its analysis showed that jobs created by growth in the public sector were 25 per cent of the total jobs created in the towns or cities. The top performer was Milton Keynes, followed by Milton Keynes, Leamington Spa, Northampton and Peterborough.

The key factors linking successful towns were low population density, a high rate of land change from rural to urban use, a work-

force with higher than average qualifications, and, in many cases, a rapidly growing historical.

Lower performers tended to lack these factors. Led by Leamington, they included Birmingham, Manchester, Glasgow, Brighton, Sheffield and Portsmouth.

Richard Holt, director of Business Strategies and the report's author, said it was no surprise larger cities mostly did worse than smaller ones, but that was not just because traditional industries had died. Leamington, he said, had done well.

He said: "Most of Britain's biggest cities lack room for growth, and that has been among their major problems. They are densely populated and they lack space on their boundaries into which they can expand."

Access to government funds helped a city's performance, but was not the whole story. "Liverpool is the extreme example of a city where large amounts of

Table with 2 columns: Town, Jobs created 1987-92. Data includes Milton Keynes (41,712), Leamington (36,096), Leamington (36,096), Northampton (34,880), Dudley (25,008), Crawley (20,111), Warrington (18,884), Peterborough (18,879), and Peterborough (11,357).

public funds have either not been used or have been used in a way that has done little to create jobs in the business community."

He said: "Business in the towns and cities is the key to the success of the country. It is the heart of the economy and it is the heart of the nation."

He said: "Business in the towns and cities is the key to the success of the country. It is the heart of the economy and it is the heart of the nation."

Business Strategies Ltd, the economic consultancy,

recently announced the results of a major survey

of employment growth in 51 towns

outside London.

Among the top ten job-creating towns

are five CNT locations: Crawley,

Milton Keynes, Northampton,

Warrington and Peterborough.

Room for growth and a highly

qualified workforce are cited as

two of the most significant

job-creating criteria. These are two hallmarks of every

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CNT is the largest owner of development land in

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here and overseas.

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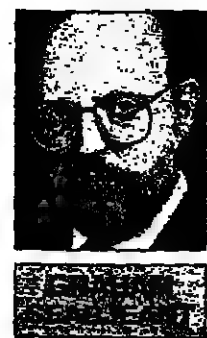
Utility rules should not be a lottery

Contrary to popular myth, economists do agree about one thing. By far the most important price in the economy is the wholesale price of money. It can be set by markets but generations of politicians reckoned that the stakes were too high. Objective experts should decide.

In Britain, that meant the Chancellor, with advice from Treasury economists. But the inflation era showed that politicians could not be trusted either. Germany, which left it to experts, seemed to do better. One of the first acts of Gordon Brown, on becoming Chancellor, was to hand control to experts at the Bank of England, who are periodically appointed by politicians to fix interest rates independently on terms of reference that will not be reversed. If we join the euro, the Chancellor will appoint only one of the experts and politicians will have even less control. And if the Bank committee seems inclined to take wrong decisions, that is mainly because it has not been

given the right terms of reference. Interest rate decisions should be independent, not democratic. So why do noises coming out of government suggest that politicians want to take greater control of less important prices, such as the price of gas, water, electricity and even telephone calls? "Senior ministerial sources" suggest that Margaret Beckett, our chief Minister of the Environment, Trade, cannot abide jolly. Clare Spottiswoode, our gas regulator, or that jolly John Prescott, our environment supremo, is exasperated with Ian Byatt, our coal water regulator. It is time to shed the pretence that regulators are independent, urge members of the authoritarian tendency. They should be put under accountable political control. If the lottery regulator can resign of his own free will, the free will of others appointed before May 1997 can be

bent in the same direction, preferably up behind their backs. With luck, this is just bar-room briefing. Mrs Beckett is shortly due to unveil her review of utility regulation. Thus far, in spite of City carping, she has proved sensibly sceptical of corporate motives but pragmatic on the facts. After being hamstrung initially by privatisation settlements fixed by politicians, regulators have generally secured good price deals and better service for consumers, unimaginable when most utilities were in the public sector. The main reason is that price limits have given companies incentives, have allowed them to prosper if they meet or beat their targets. When 10 million of us bought utility shares, the theory was that we would unite the interests of consumers and owners, with regulators there to referee. The theory may be dodgy



but it worked in practice. Only when regulation became too theoretical and interventionist, as in the hasty dismemberment of British Gas, have customers suffered. One lesson is that relations between a single regulator and a single regulated company are liable to be too cosy or too adversarial. Industries have changed, so the industrial structure of regulation

should evolve too and best practice spread around. And all regulators should report to Parliament. In future, one regulatory body should cover finance, competition and service in both gas and electricity, another rail and buses, which are already closely integrated. And Ofwat should cover much more, including the Post Office. One more reform is needed to promote consumers' interests. The price and quality of services still in the public sector, such as the letter post and Scottish water, should also be vetted. Posting a letter costs more than an independent regulator would allow, because the Chancellor exploits his monopoly. If he wants to tax the post, he should do so openly. The same applies to green issues. Water consumers have been served better because the Environment Agency bats for clean rivers while Ofwat bats on

prices. The balance is a choice for elected ministers in public, not for an official to fix in private. Power regulators cannot try to keep prices down for consumers and put them up for the environment at the same time. Alongside the review, however, there runs a suspicion that the Government has another agenda. Gordon Brown's utility levy was seen as settling Labour's pre-election campaign against companies privatised by the Tories. Rhetoric about putting consumers before shareholders and making the next round of price limits much tougher is inevitable. But does it mean something more that ministers need enemies and want to keep utilities cast as villains? Having tagged the millions of us who remain shareholders as "very well off", there may be pressure on regulators, or their politicised successors, to squeeze the companies

until the pips squeak. If that happens, consumers and investors will suffer together as they have benefited together in the past. The first casualties of "tough" price settlements will be employees, many thousands more of whom will be sacked, farmed out or have their pay cut and pensions phased out. If investors are denied attractive returns, they will withdraw their capital, as they already have on a massive scale from gas, local electricity and the National Grid. Ultimately, most companies will end up foreign-owned, financed by junk bonds, or both. Instead of promoting investment that brings guaranteed future returns, some are already trying to avoid it. The ultimate logic of some Treasury thinking is to ensure that these great companies no longer prosper and then to force ordinary families to buy them via stakeholder pensions invested to track the share index. In a sense, it would bring privatisation to a full vicious circle. Consumers and investors fare better if they march together in parallel lines.

America appears to have lost the stomach for sanctions war



AMERICAN AGENDA
BRONWEN MADDOX

For the past week, the babble of American politics has been drowned out by an unfamiliar chorus. Tony Blair's effusions of loyalty to President Clinton, jokes about the Oval Office and the drone of aircraft taking off for the Gulf. They have obscured a startling new note: the first murmurs that the United States is rethinking its love of sanctions to slap the rest of the world into line. That review is long overdue. The US now has sanctions in place against some 70 countries, and the Administration and Congress are simultaneously realising that sanctions rarely work as envisaged; they can also harm its economic interests and corrode its foreign policy. From Europe's point of view, if this willingness to re-examine the addiction yields real changes, it will mark a subtle but hugely valuable shift in US trade and foreign policies.

No one would know it from Mr Blair's manifesto of brotherhood last week, but sanctions are a deep thorn in the transatlantic relationship. Under the 1996 Iran-Libya Sanctions Act, the US proposes to slap financial penalties on foreign companies which invest more than \$20 million in Iran's petroleum industry. The "Helms-Burton" legislation similarly penalises those trading with Cuba. Enraged trading partners see this as an unjustified application of US law outside the nation's borders. Pope John Paul II, during his visit to Cuba last month, also

called for an end to the US embargo. For two years the EU and the State Department have managed to avoid bringing the conflict to a head. But both sides are finding it hard to sidestep the next row: the State Department is currently deciding whether to slap penalties on a \$2 billion Iranian gas project with French, Russian and Malaysian partners.

Mr Blair's delegation failed to resolve the issue, as did a separate meeting in Brussels last week between State Department officials and the EU trade commissioner Sir Leon Brittan. The US is also watching closely as Shell carries out a nine-month survey of a future 940-mile pipeline to carry gas from Turkmenistan through Iran to Turkey.

A fondness for sanctions is not a new flavor in US politics. But during the Cold War, the threat of military force was the main instrument of coercion on other countries — and weapons proliferation the main target. Use of sanctions has proliferated as congressional politics has become more susceptible to single-issue lobbies, such as religion and human rights.

Sanctions against Libya and Cuba were slammed through Congress on a spike of passion after the Lockerbie bombing, which the US has laid at Libya's door, and the shooting down of two small US-registered aircraft over Cuba. Others are targeted at curbing the spread of nuclear weapons or ending female circumcision; the ban on flights to the US by Nigeria Airways stems from Nigeria's alleged failure to fight drug traffic.

The result is that the US now has some form of embargo or trade restriction on at least 73 countries, according to free-trade lobbyists (the Administration maintains no comprehensive list). A congressional study counted at least 61 instances between 1993 and 1996 in which the US slapped some kind of financial penalty on 35 countries or their companies, a rate 15 times higher than during the Cold War.

In response, the State Department last month created a new "sanctions team". Its head, Stuart Eizenstat, Under-



Joint effort: Pope John Paul II and Cuba's Fidel Castro want an end to US sanctions

secretary of State for Economic Affairs, argues that sanctions are a useful, if limited, tool, but that the US needs to review their purpose, cost and effectiveness. At the same time, Senator Richard Lugar, a Republican from Indiana, is sponsoring a "sanctions reform bill" which would require that sanctions

mandated by Congress be focused as narrowly as possible, have a clear objective and respect contracts already signed. Sanctions would expire after two years unless renewed, and the President would have to report on their success and cost to the US economy.

Those parallel reviews have turned more attention on the

shortcomings of sanctions. That they do not often dislodge dictators such as Fidel Castro or Saddam Hussein is not in itself evidence of failure; Richard Haas, scholar at Brookings, says Iraq would be much weaker without the past seven years of isolation.

But a wide range of studies shows that sanctions rarely

have a great impact on the undesirable behaviour of the target country, particularly if the US cannot muster support from other countries, as is increasingly the case. Even more controversial is the growing evidence of the direct cost to US businesses, and the markets lost forever, even after sanctions are lifted. Farmers flocked to the anti-sanctions lobby after President Jimmy Carter banned the sale of US grain to the Soviet Union after the 1979 invasion of Afghanistan; they argue now that his move, which cost them billions of dollars, opened the door to competition in Australia and Brazil.

The President's Export Council estimates that in 1995, sanctions cost the US between \$15 billion and \$19 billion in lost exports. There are also hidden costs. Enforcement and justification eats up the time of officials, while businesses must tangle with regulatory changes. Perhaps most worrying is that unilateral penalties could also bring the US into conflict with the World Trade Organisation. The US might well lose any such adjudication, to its immediate cost; if it refused to recognise the ruling, it would undermine the WTO's authority, to the greater loss of international trade.

Those arguments have been growing more powerful for years. But it is no coincidence that the US's willingness to re-examine its fondness for sanctions came in the weeks of Mr Blair's visit to Washington. The Administration's attitude towards Europe has suddenly warmed, after years of infatuation with the now-suspect Asian miracle. That has given more muscle to people like Mr Eizenstat, a former EU ambassador, and to heads of European countries themselves.

As Mr Clinton and Mr Blair walked back from last Friday's tumultuous press conference in the White House East Wing — where the Prime Minister had spent 45 minutes defending the President's character — Mr Clinton said: "I'm going to make sure that you're proud of what you did in there."

If this means anything other than a willingness to mouth equally generous compliments during a future Florentino LaGuardia Award for good works in job creation, Kravis had set up the New York City Investment Fund, which aims to promote economic growth within the city, and has already raised \$62 million. His reward is a foot-high statue of one of New York's most revered former mayors. Who during his 1934-45 term of office was noted for his liberal sympathies and the widespread welfare programme he introduced, as I recall. And who must be spinning in his grave.

that, this being France, I somehow doubt it.

Snow blind

AS the latest Olympics drugs scandal — he didn't inhale, he didn't even light up — hands the Austrian team a gold medal, things are not so rosy for the snowboard industry back home. This improbable sport has caught on among the young, but fashion is fickle and there is now a worldwide snowboard mountain, it seems, producers having wildly overestimated demand. Nearly a million of the things clutter up warehouses and shops, and Austria, one of the main producers, has seen sales fall by nearly 10 per cent since last season. It seems these glorified toboggans are now heading the way of the hula-hoop. As, indeed, anyone with any sense would have predicted. Except that, as ever, they didn't.

AT ASCOT yesterday, in the 3.35 HSBC James Capel Reynoldstown Novices Chase, I see the favourite was Fiddling the Facts. It didn't run.

Jobs job

HENRY KRAVIS of Kohlberg Kravis Roberts and the other buyout experts went through America industry like a Mongol horde in the late 1980s, cut-

MARTIN WALLER



Kravis wins an award for creating jobs

Bring the Wild West Internet under control

The events of the past two weeks seem to have demonstrated what every business fears about electronic commerce: it will be fundamentally flawed by an unreliable and incompatible tangle of networks, run by unaccountable idealists. Trouble began when the US Government decided to overhaul the system of registering Internet addresses. This resulted in Jon Postel, the academic in charge of the system, disrupting the entire Internet for a day in protest. Businesses were furious — and concerned at the vulnerability of the Internet.

Add to this the European Commission's hint last week that it might devise an alternative address registering system and its easy to see why many businesses regard the Internet as being the Wild West of the late 20th century. There is also, of course, the problem of there being no trademark protection, consumer protection, or indeed almost any recognisable legal framework to take away risk from trading on the Internet. If nothing is done, the future of electronic commerce looks very bleak indeed.

One organisation, the Open Group, has recognised this problem and is lobbying to be put in charge of making the Internet a safe place to do business. It is a consortium of more than 200 companies, government advisers and academics, sponsored by nine big players in the information technology sector, including Novell, Sun Microsystems and Digital.

The Internet should be able to transfer huge amounts of money. At the moment no one is going to put anything on the Internet that has a high value: intellectual or monetary, says Jeffrey Manton, a director of the Open Group. Mr Manton says the Open Group has devised its own standardised system of software and components for the Internet that will allow large sums of money to be transferred quickly and securely down telephone cables.

The Norwegian Government last week said it would work with the Open Group to implement the system. "When regulation was laid down for railways they took off," says Mr Manton. "We would like to lay down those standards." Although the Open Group obviously has its own commercial agenda — and should be treated with a healthy degree of scepticism — its aim is sound. When it interviewed more than 100 companies from the FTSE 500, it found that 77 per cent of them would not trust the Internet to play

an important part in a commercial project. Even the US Government recognises there is a problem. It says: "The Internet functions well, but its technical management is probably not viable over the long term. We should not wait for it to break." The technology to make the Internet work already exists; the urgent task now is to overcome commercial and political obstacles to create a standardised, efficient and secure environment for business.

THIS week PolyGram became the first big UK record company to start selling music on the Internet, in a move that directly threatens high street retailers.

Alain Levy, president and chief executive, also said that he had created a task force to devise a coherent strategy for online distribution of music and video before the summer. He said: "It requires such a deep change in the behaviour of consumers that I would be very conservative in my outlook. But I wouldn't like to be wrong."

He added that the Internet



urgently needed an international legal framework established by the US, European and Asian governments. "There is a lot of legal work to be done before I am satisfied."

RICHARD CABBON, Minister for the Regions, Regeneration and Planning, this week launched an online database of commercial land available in England for foreign investment — in a sophisticated ploy to market the country as a centre for European inward investment. Companies considering an investment in England register at the site, then fill out an online form saying which region they are interested in, what size site they need, and how close it must be to local transport links. They then hit a button, and the database comes up with a list of sites, with pictures, maps, and contact numbers and addresses. The system, the first of its kind, has been created by English Partnerships and is backed by the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors.

CHRIS AYRES

Air strike

BRACE yourselves. The one-off war between John Gorman, the former policeman, and British Airways is back on again. Gorman, whose claims are many and colourful, has been trying to serve a writ for libel against the world's favourite airline. The quarrel started in 1990 and accelerated in 1993, two occasions when various undesirables were or were not served to him on BA flights. The libel writ, if I may simplify, has to do with a press release issued by BA alleging Gorman was a fraudster. In November 1996 he lost his case about a piece of broken glass he said he found in a BA

drink. But this result was struck out at the Court of Appeal last week, and he can now proceed again. Another case alleging harassment by BA is continuing. Today he hopes to serve the libel writ against BA, which would only say last night that it had yet to be received. I know grown journalists who turn white and leave the room on mention of this hideously tangled feud, but I am made of sterner stuff. I will keep you posted.

COINCIDENCE, maybe? Alan Sugar, the discreet and understated boss of Tottenham Hotspur, becomes chairman of Vigen. Which decides to give up its sponsorship of Charlton Athletic. Spurs risk relegation from the Premier League, while Charlton might be promoted from the Nationwide First Division. And it would hardly do for the Spurs chairman to back a rival London club passing on the up escalator as his team are heading down. "We weren't sure we were getting great value," said Borden Trachuck, Vigen's chief executive. Hum.

Ferry fishy

THE man who could be the last captain on the bridge at



Brittany Ferries has just been piped on board. Jean-Michel Masson, 49, has been brought across from Air France to run the ferry operation while a team of accountants go through the books to see if it is viable without French government subsidy. Brittany Ferries has been propped up for as long as anyone can remember, despite Brussels rules on state aid and to the distress of our own P&O service.

But a while back Claude Gaysot, the Minister of Transport, decreed that there would be no more government money and brought in the accountants. Brittany Ferries is also facing the end of the lucrative cross-Channel duty-free trade next year. Theoretically, therefore, the business could be scuttled before this summer's high season. Except



"Football isn't everything. How are your Vigen shares?"

Milner to acquire Five Oaks for £40m

By CARL MORTISHED

MILNER ESTATES, the property and surveying firm headed by John Riblat, is to buy Five Oaks, a company in which British Land, where Mr Riblat is also chairman, has a 28 per cent interest. The £40 million bid for Five Oaks is Milner's second takeover of a small property group within a year. It is likely to increase stock market interest in the bottom tier of the quoted property sector, occasionally called "life-style companies", which have been left out of the market's recent advance. Philip Lewis, Milner's chief executive, said the company was on the lookout for more corporate deals.

Milner's share-for-share offer values the target at 39p a share, up 17 per cent on Monday's share price. There is also a cash alternative of 36p per Five Oaks share. Milner has secured the acceptance of PDM, the fund manager, and British Land, who together account for 55 per cent of the shares. Milner Estates yesterday said that Mr Riblat had taken no part in the board discussions relating to the offer.

Milner Estates was formerly Conrad Riblat, the chartered surveying firm, but rapidly built up a small property portfolio that is now worth some £180 million.

Mr Lewis says there is a prevailing view among institutions that there are too many small property companies. He noted: "If you look at the cash cost of running a small property company, it cannot be good value for shareholders."

Five Oaks, which owns some £75 million of office and retail property in London and the Thames Valley, had staff costs last year of £705,000 and pre-tax profits of £3.5 million. Compensation to main board directors, John Watkins and Tim Walter, could reach £500,000. Milner Estates said that it would be paying their contracts, which extend to August 1999, in full.



Flying the flag: James Tuckey, chief executive of MEPC, the property group that will be concentrating on UK investment

Chiroscience signs deal to develop cancer drugs

By PAUL DURMAN

CHIROSCIENCE, the drug development company, has licensed two potential cancer treatments to Bristol-Myers Squibb, the American group that is the world leader in cancer therapy.

Although Bristol-Myers Squibb does not wish to disclose the financial details, Christine Soden, Chiroscience's finance director, said this was the biggest deal that the company, which is based in Cambridge, has done. Andy Richards, director of business development, said Chiroscience stands to receive many tens of millions of pounds in milestone payments if its compounds can be developed into

prescribable drugs. Potentially more important, Chiroscience will receive royalties on any sales of the drugs, although they are unlikely to reach the market before 2002.

Both of the compounds covered by the deal, D2163 and D1927, belong to the same class as marimastat, the British Biotech cancer drug generally regarded as the most important medicine so far developed by the UK's biotechnology industry. All three drugs are inhibitors of matrix metalloproteinases, the enzymes that play a key role in

the progress of cancers and other diseases. However, Chiroscience's compounds are chemically very different and, in tests on animals, have not caused the inflammation that leads to the arm and shoulder pains suffered by some users of marimastat.

Chiroscience only recently began phase I safety trials of D2163, while D1927 is due to start similar tests next month. Dr Richards strongly defended the decision to license the products at this relatively early stage. He said: "Bristol-Myers Squibb are the world's leading oncology company. They really have the clinical

clout to be able to add a lot of value here. We have a common view on how we need to develop these compounds. It's a good deal for us."

Dr Richards said licensing rights to matrix metalloproteinase inhibitors (MMPis) had been a big objective for Bristol-Myers Squibb this year.

Bristol-Myers Squibb will bear the bulk of future development costs, and will own the cancer rights to any new MMPis discovered. Chiroscience will retain the rights in other therapeutic areas.

Shares in Chiroscience rose 7p to 268p.

MEPC sells Australian properties for £206m

By KATEY LIPARI

MEPC, the property group, yesterday completed another phase of its foreign assets sale programme, offloading most of its Australian properties in two deals worth £206 million. However, the company was only able to realise 90 per cent of the book value of A\$545 million (£228 million) for the 23 properties.

James Tuckey, chief executive, said the Asian crisis had affected market interest. "Undoubtedly Asia has had an effect but it's hard to say exactly how much," he said. The sales represented a yield of 8.6 per cent. Twenty-two of the properties were sold to AMP Asset Management, the Australian insurance and investment group, the other, a shopping centre in Brisbane, was bought by Shin Yee, a Taiwanese property investor.

The agreements leave MEPC with just two retail properties in Australia and the sale negotiations for one of these are well advanced, according to the group.

MEPC has also committed to sell its US assets, but while interest for its properties, which consist mainly of six shopping centres, has been strong, nothing has been finalised.

The divestments come after MEPC's decision to focus its efforts entirely in the UK. After the sales, Mr Tuckey said MEPC would be left with a substantial kitty to drive its future expansion.

"Acquisitions in the UK would continue to be a high priority, funded by spending power of at least £600 million over the next 12 to 18 months. About £300 million is to be returned to investors after the final Australian and US sales are completed."

RMC pays £54m for lime producer stake

RMC Group has sold its half-share of a German lime producer for £54.5 million in the wake of anxiety about steel industry rationalisation. RMC's 50 per cent stake in Chaulfourneries de Hergent is being bought by Lhoist, the Belgian lime producer. The sale was part of the joint venture, RMC said, the disposal of which will lead to a small loss. Industry sources suggested this could be about £2 million.

The steel industry provides much of the market for Chaulfourneries' products. Robert Lambourne, RMC finance director, said the merger of Krupp and Thyssen, the German steel producers, raised the possibility of site closures and a decrease in demand. RMC's share of the 1997 post-tax profits was expected to fall from £7.5 million in 1996. RMC will not receive payment for its stake until January 1999.

Chemical solution

THE European chemical industry needs to restructure if it is to maintain its position as a world leader, according to Simon de Bree, chief executive of DSM, the Dutch chemicals group. Speaking in London, Mr de Bree said in spite of its market strength — annual consumption in Europe is £214 billion — European manufacturers were lagging in profitability and productivity. He said they should aim for more production in production as well as pipeline logistics.

BSkyB hits right note

BSKYB, the satellite venture partly owned by News International, parent company of The Times, has formed a joint venture with Music Choice Europe, the music broadcaster. Sky Music Choice will offer subscribers up to 60 channels of music broadcast 24-hours a day. The new service, to be launched in April, will carry themed channels such as rock, pop and classical. Other shareholders in the venture include Warner Music Group and Sony Corporation.

Dredging shares boost

SHARES in British Dredging leapt from 126p to 152p after the building materials group said it had received an approach that may or may not lead to an offer. At yesterday's closing price, British Dredging is worth £26.6 million. The company, also revealed that its full-year results, due to be published in March, are expected to be in line with market forecasts, but that it will announce exceptional profits on two disposals.

Criterion in joint venture

CRITERION PROPERTIES said it is to invest up to \$20 million (£11.9 million) in establishing a joint venture with Oaktree, the US fund manager, to maximise returns from investment in up to £60 million of British properties. Oaktree will contribute £20 million to the venture. Criterion said. As part of the formation of the venture, Criterion will sell the venture company its Bouvade House property in Fleet Street for £12 million, releasing £2.8 million of cash resources.

Heal's sales up 15%

SHARES of Heal's, the furniture retailer that floated last year, jumped 9p to 182p yesterday as the company said its underlying sales growth remained in double-digits over Christmas. Like-for-like sales grew 15 per cent for the 20 weeks to January, against 19 per cent in the previous 20 weeks. This included 11 per cent in the last week to January 18. Analysts said the share price is unlikely to pick up until Heal's signs a contract to open a new furniture store — which is expected to be in Glasgow.

RSL to launch Internet voice service

By RAYMOND SNOODY
MEDIA EDITOR

RSL.COM, the telecommunications company founded by Ronald Lauder, a principal shareholder in The Estate Lauder Companies, plans to launch an international telephone-to-telephone Internet voice service in April. The

company is planning to use its own intranet rather than the World Wide Web, where telephone conversations have been associated with poor sound quality and delays.

Izrah Fisher, co-founder and president of RSL, said the sound quality on its new voice service, which it expects to be the first of its kind in the

world, would be the equivalent of mobile telephony.

RSL already operates its own international telephone network, including ownership of its own switches, and has links with 14 European countries. The company, aimed mainly at the small and medium-sized business market, says it offers 15 per cent discounts to the

competitive charges of a company like BT.

"The Internet service will be 20 to 30 per cent cheaper than the discounted rate," says Mr Fisher, who says he regards the new intranet RSL is building as a network for the future. RSL is likely to market the new Internet service, which can also offer PC to telephone

conversation as a "lower quality, lower cost" service.

A PC to telephone service has already been introduced in the US on a pre-paid basis. Without any advertising, in four months more than 10,000 users in 140 countries have used it and spent \$400,000 (£240,000).

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ACCOUNTANCY

Flaws in company tax reform

Firms risk having to use guesswork to pay their dues to the Inland Revenue, says David Cruickshank

Hats were flung in the air when, in his Green Budget, Gordon Brown announced the end of advance corporation tax (ACT). Some of them hit the ground when it sank in what the cost would be.

The abolition of ACT in April 1999 will benefit the cashflow of all companies that pay dividends and remove a glaring inequity for companies that pay dividends out of foreign earnings. This will have a cost to the Exchequer, which it has to make good. It is hardly surprising that the Treasury has chosen to have corporation tax paid more quickly. In comparison with other countries, the UK is presently very generous in allowing corporation tax to be paid nine months after the year.

The Chancellor proposes that corporation tax should be paid in quarterly instalments, starting in the middle of month seven of the current year — on average ten months more quickly than at present. This huge burden on companies' cashflow is tempered by three factors:

- The new system will be phased in over three years;
- The corporation tax rate for "large" companies will be

reduced by one percentage point to 30 per cent;

□ "Small" companies will continue to pay their tax nine months after the year end and "medium-sized" companies will pay half their tax this way and half in instalments.

This may seem a fair compromise (though in the first four years the Exchequer will collect an extra £7 billion from companies), so why have we made representations to the Revenue on a number of aspects?

The first problem is that the quarterly payments are to be based on an estimate of current-year profit. Six and a half months into the year, it will be impossible for many companies to have a reasonable idea what they will make for the rest of the year, however sophisticated their budgeting. How can retailers predict what will happen in their Christmas trade, their January sales and their end-January stock write-downs? How can construction companies guess when their cycle will turn?

Secondly, whether a company is large, medium or small depends on its profit for the year. Again, guessing the profit when only six and a half months have run will be



David Cruickshank wants a rethink on corporation tax

chancy and could prove expensive. Take two companies, A and B. Each thought their profits would be below the £300,000 threshold for a small company and so made no payments on account. In the event, A's profits are £1 over £300,000 and B's £1 under. After being charged interest on the instalments it failed to

pay, A would be nearly £2,000 worse off than B.

Why not take a leaf out of self-assessment for individuals and base instalments on a company's tax and size in the previous year, with a facility to reduce the instalments if there are proper grounds for claiming that the current year is going worse? This will by no

means solve all problems, though. When the first instalment is due (after six and a half months), there are five and a half months to go before a company's tax return for the previous year has to go to the Revenue, and three and a half before a private company's accounts have to go to the Companies Registry. So its information on the previous year may not be fully up to date.

Next, it is not clear what will happen if a company pays an instalment that, at the time, it thinks reasonable but which at a later stage looks excessive. It would be unfair for the company to have to wait till its tax return was due — 12 months after the year end — to get its overpaid tax back. The company should be entitled to repayment as soon as it is clear that it has overpaid.

Finally, the interest structure is skewed. Underpay an instalment, and the company is to be charged at a borrower's rate (currently 7.5 per cent post-tax). Overpay, and it is to receive interest at a depositor's rate (currently 4 per cent). This would be too large a differential. Getting instalments right will be a matter of hit or miss, even if the previous year's tax is the starting point.

The Budget is on March 17. It is not too late for the Government to have second thoughts on some of its proposals.

The author is head of London tax at Deloitte & Touche

Party time for chips off the big blocks

EARLIER this week the firm of Rees Pollock held a party for clients and friends at Apothecaries Hall, just around the corner from its offices in the City. It was, as such events are, a simple thank-you with a tinge of marketing. However, it was also celebrating something else.

The firm is about to mark its eighth anniversary. It now has fee income of £15 million, five partners and 25 staff. The significance, though, is that its formation was as a child of the last round of mega-mergers among the giant accountancy firms. Just as then, the Big Eight came down to the Big Six, now we are in the throes of seeing efforts at taking the global giants down to the Big Four.

The time may well be ripe, as it was when Rees Pollock was founded, for niche firms to spin off from the merging behemoths. Certainly the possibilities in the consulting sector are there. John Lovell is a senior manager with Arthur Andersen until last August, when he decided to take his expertise in the field of capital allowances and set up his own small firm, called Lovell Consulting. It took him a month to set up the business with a couple of colleagues.

Now he finds himself in the happy position, he says, of already exceeding his business plan. He has found many others have done in similar positions. Large blue-chip companies are very happy to buy niche services from tiny firms. Lovell finds himself doing work for four of the biggest UK retailers and three of the biggest building societies. "Where companies have in-house tax departments," he says, "they will go for the best service at a reasonable price and that does not automatically mean the Big Six."

It is a simple matter of overhead. With one of the global giants, clients pay £250 an hour upwards for a tax manager and £500 upwards for a partner. And then there is what is known as the "blended" rate, where much of the work is leveraged down to junior staff. A niche firm will have the same expertise, but at a tiny fraction of the overhead. If the company is confident that the niche firm has the expertise, there is no reason to go for a Big Six firm.

There are also obvious advantages for the people who set up the niche firms. There is, as Lovell and a host of other niche players will tell you, "the buzz" of the challenge. New clients mean a feeling of real achievement. "At Arthur Andersen," Lovell says, "if you

brought in a new client, all it meant was that you were busier."

There is another reason why more niche players may spin out of the large accounting firms. It is a very simple management reason. People in the large firms who are operating in a small niche market often find that there are correspondingly few partnership prospects around.

The arguments about the mega-mergers are also a very useful background for small firms to pick up more work that the Big Six might previously have gained. In particular, the controversy over conflicts of interest among a dwindling number of giant accounting firms is helping.

Arvid Pollock, one of the two founding partners of Rees Pollock, says that there has been much more griping from clients that they are fed up with the attitudes of Big Six firms over the past year. Rees Pollock has recently picked up several jobs in the litigation support field because the big firms were unable to do the work because of conflicts of interest, including work a few weeks ago for, significantly, the Department of Trade and Industry.

Pollock reckons that the market is open again for niche players. "If you can see the niche, are confident and have good people, then there is an opportunity," he says. "The market is there, we have proved that."

Rees Pollock was a spin-off after the merger between Ernst & Whinney and Arthur Young created Ernst & Young, which is now attempting a merger with KPMG. It was precisely the sort of situation that will be replicated if the current round of mega-mergers are allowed through by the regulators.

However, there is one issue that may mean that fewer Big Six partners will jump ship than you might expect. It is a question of earnings much more. The post-recession policy efficiency has seen earnings rocket. The shown in the last Ernst & Young accounts is a higher figure than the senior partner at 1989 merger. If you are earning a quarter of a million pounds it is harder to take that step faces of the founding partners of Rees Pollock at their party this week would have anyone that it was well worth taking.



ROBERT BRUCE

ICA dismay over pay

AVOID visiting the English ICA next Tuesday. The entire staff at Moorgate Place are expected to be even more miserable and down in the mouth than usual.

The curse of benchmarking will be wreaking its havoc. It was decided from upon high that the whole complicated system of grading staff for pay rates was out of kilter. So for a year consultants have been regreeding and benchmarking everyone's jobs. The results,

which will be announced next Tuesday, are expected to mean a significant number of staff finding their pay frozen. Paul Clicker, the institute's administration chief, is expected to have to barricade himself in his office for the day.

Sue's just the ticket

NO ONE has ever said the headquarters of Grant Thornton, towering in front of Euston station in London, was

a lovely thing. But now that it has discovered a heritage expert in its midst all this may change. Sue Palmer, director of marketing for the past ten years, has been made a trustee of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, which provides the cash to look after the nation's heritage and distributes the heritage share of National Lottery proceeds. Expect more than a few speculative applications from accountants to have their heritage protected.

NI flight of fancy

THE Chartered Institute of Taxation has put its thoughts in to the Government's review of "stakeholder pensions" and is adamant about national insurance contributions. "Many people believe they are contributing to their future pension by collecting 'stamps', the institute said. "In reality, NIC is simply a tax." The institute's solution is clear: "If the basis of contribution has to become compulsory,

as we believe is the case, then NIC could disappear. And pigs, of course, could fly.

Arched eyebrows

AUDITORS and institutional shareholders were upset at Gerry Robinson's handling of the Granada annual meeting. He invited "Mr Archer", of the auditors KPMG, to read their report. An embarrassed Gerry Archer — head of the English ICA's audit faculty and probably the best-known auditor in the country — stepped up

ROBERT BRUCE

Private healthcare in Britain is being forced to change the way it operates in order to survive. After the boom of the Eighties, when membership grew steadily, the number of people with policies has remained static, half the beds in private hospitals are unoccupied and the Labour Government has carried out its pre-election threat to withdraw tax concessions on premiums.

Private healthcare, with an annual turnover of £2.35 billion, remains big business. About 12 per cent of the population is covered by it and one in five of all planned operations is carried out on a private patient. For members, the benefits are obvious. They do not have to join waiting lists to see consultants or have laboratory tests.

They can get a hip replacement at a short notice as Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother. Cataract removal, heart bypass surgery and hernia operations are all available virtually on demand.

Despite these advantages, membership has stagnated in the Nineties, partly because of the recession. Three out of five subscriptions are in corporate membership schemes and as companies began to cut back staff or close, private healthcare numbers fell.

Another reason was that subscriptions rose rapidly, sometimes at double the rate of inflation, because of the growing expense of providing the most modern care.

While existing members have hung on, even though premiums have risen and tax relief has been withdrawn, new members are scarcely flocking to join.

David Bryant of Bupa, the market leader, says: "Fifteen years ago only two companies were offering this type of cover. Now there are more than 30 and people are confused. We are also having to work hard to keep prices down."

In the boom years Bupa was encouraged to build its own hospitals, and it was not alone. NHS hospitals saw private wings as nice little earners to subsidise their budgets. Private hospital chains expanded.

The result is that there is now overcapacity, which not only puts up premiums because of the cost of keeping beds empty, but means that quality control is difficult. Most consultants used are employed in the NHS and tend to use hospitals they know.

Bupa and PPP, the other big provider, are trying to solve the problem by building up



About 12 per cent of the population is covered by private healthcare: members do not have to wait for treatment

A business that can only get better

Ian Murray introduces a special report on how private health companies are adapting to the business challenges of the Nineties medical market

networks they inspect to ensure that they give optimum service.

Bupa, which has 36 units of its own and a national network of 180 hospitals, has angered the British Medical Association by drawing up contracts with consultants, requiring them to send patients only to network units. The consultants gain a 5 per cent bonus at the end of the year as a reward.

PPP is building up a national network, ensuring that each hospital it accepts has the facilities and staff to provide the most up-to-date care.

Dr Adrian Bull, in charge of PPP's procurement policy, says: "Things have changed radically in the private sector because we are being required

to do more and more complex operations. We have to ensure that hospitals are equipped to carry them out and can provide the support services."

"Overcapacity meant that hospitals were competing for the loyalty of consultants who would refer patients to them. A patient would be treated where the doctor chose and we just paid the bill. Now we are introducing a quality control, which means that we can monitor care and prices."

PPP has signed up several NHS trusts for its network after it beat off strong com-

petition from private units. The NHS is now the largest single provider of private beds, treating 104,000 patients a year and earning an average of £235 from each.

This is an important source of income in some of these NHS hospitals, which derive up to 11 per cent of their income from private patients. The money enables them to subsidise NHS care, although critics point out that it perpetuates a two-tier system.

The thrust of NHS reforms is for more primary care in an environment where public health has improved to a level at which illness becomes less common.

Bupa and Sinclair Montrose Healthcare have both realised that this means there is a niche in the private healthcare market.

Bupa has pilot schemes of walk-in GP surgeries in Reading, Wakefield and Stockport. Sinclair Montrose opened its first "medicentre" at Victoria Station in London in 1996.

So many patients were prepared to pay £36 for an immediate consultation that the company plans to have a chain of 24 by the end of the year in stations, shopping malls and town centres. Norwich Union is to launch a policy to give cover for private GP consultations.

The Government is expected to give the NHS a £2 billion birthday present in July. The BMA welcomes the extra money, but is already saying it will not be enough.

The public, according to a BBC poll last week, is prepared to pay an extra 2p in the pound to provide more money, but there is never likely to be enough cash to satisfy demand. There will therefore always be a place for the private sector to fill the gap between supply and demand, for those who can afford it.

'We monitor care and prices'

Support for staff in sickness and health

Days off cost British business £12 billion a year.

Pat Blair on promoting well-being at work

Companies are becoming more worried about employee care. For example, at Sam one day, the telephone to an information helpline rang.

The caller was a manager in his mid-thirties, expressing great concern and seeking advice over a £39 direct debit that had mistakenly been taken from his bank account. Skilled and sensitive questioning disclosed that was not the real difficulty. The man was deeply in debt, had personal family problems and could not sleep for worry. As a result, his work suffered.

In that case, the solution was found in a combination of services, including the provision of legal and financial advice, says Colin Grange, clinical manager of PPP healthcare's Employee Support service.

Such a confidential service, called an employee assistance scheme (EAP), is the latest in a range of workplace measures aiming to promote health in its widest sense, defined by the World Health Organisation as being "mental, physical and social well-being", rather than merely the absence of disease. It is, perhaps, a recognition that people take time off work for reasons apart from physical ill-health.

Keith Thrower, the corporate services director of PPP, says that these schemes have grown from 300,000 in 1993 to 1.4 million employees covered in 1996-97. About 5 per cent of employees in the UK are now covered by EAP schemes.

"Enlightened employers are concerned about the overall effectiveness of their labour force. We got interested after our analysis of sickness absence," he says. Employers were interested because even though staff attended work, they were ineffective because they were concerned about other things.

The CBI estimates after a survey last year covering 1.5 million employees — 7 per cent of the workforce — that sickness absence costs British business £12 billion a year, and is rising.

Yet employers lack understanding of the reasons and what they can do about it. Often, companies have no formal occupational health service or absence manage-

ment policies: they merely record sick leave and implement disciplinary procedures.

Dr Richard Welch, chief medical adviser of the Post Office's Employee Health Services, says: "In many organisations the recording of absence is so appalling that they don't know what they're dealing with." Equally, he says, "there isn't a lot of information within the UK about the healthy worker."

Many who do collect data, "don't turn it into useful information," says Dr Kevin Holland-Elliott, Bupa's assistant medical director, and a consultant in occupational medicine.

If that is so, what can employers do? Staff see health screening as an attractive benefit but, however worthwhile, individual screening is

to individuals' health profiles, can all be bought in. Increasingly, physical health is being seen as only one aspect of workplace health, and that mental and social well-being are also important.

Dr Holland-Elliott says: "When you get into workplace health programmes, you realise very quickly that all those factors contribute in different ways." When businesses learn what the cost of ill-health means to them, "then they start to take it seriously."

A number of companies now provide that consultancy, to inform employers where they are, in data terms, before they decide their next step. Pre-employment screening may follow. Or an employer may opt for risk assessment of particular types of work to

for example, whether or they pose physical problems — or whether changes could be made.

"People tend to follow safety management, because they have to, but often there is only lip service paid to health," he says. An employer could start, Dr Holland-Elliott suggests, by establishing the health issues in the particular workforce. Those for a young workforce, for example, would be different from those aged over 45. They would also differ between young women and older men. Solutions can then follow.

He cites the example of a back-pain programme established at a factory that, through reduced sickness absence, more than paid for itself within six months.

That had a knock-on effect in reducing their spending on private medical insurance. At the same time, surveys of employees are raising their increased satisfaction with the business.

In another case, "we enabled a manufacturing site to drop consistently its sickness absence by two percentage points, to under 4 per cent." This compares with nearly 7 per cent in the CBI survey. Today, managing sickness absence is not just providing medical cover when things go wrong. It means offering intervention earlier, when worries — whether physical, social, financial or legal — first arise.



Workers' health: employers take an interest

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PPP healthcare there to support you

Check out the check-ups

There is little doubt about the value of the screening. Many companies offer check-ups, and they are popular with employees. Christopher Warman writes. Companies use them as part of the package to attract high quality staff. There are about 200 private screening clinics as well as mobile on-site screening units at workplaces.

All the benefits of health screening come down to prevention and early detection, Nuffield Hospitals explains.

The company, which has 40 health screening centres nationwide, points out that the main risk factors of coronary heart disease are smoking, raised plasma cholesterol, raised blood pressure and lack of physical activity, all of which can be influenced by changes in behaviour. More women die from breast cancer than any other form of cancer, yet successful screening detects the disease at a stage when there is scope for effective treatment.

Evidence suggests that effective screening for cervical cancer could reduce deaths among women screened by more than 80 per cent and that over 93 per cent of deaths from cervical cancer are preventable. (The latest government statistics show that 85 per cent of women aged between 20 and 64 have had a cervical smear test.)

Like other health screening organisations, the Nuffield Hospitals Health Screening programmes look closely at poor levels of fitness which contribute to problems in other areas, and advise individuals how to safeguard their future health.

One of the satisfactory outcomes of the screenings —

which are viewed as part of a continuing health management process — is that two-thirds of those screened need no further advice or treatment giving the benefit of peace of mind and reassurance.

A Nuffield spokesman says: "Many individuals feel happier in themselves when the all-clear is given by a qualified screening doctor."

One of the newer tests is for employees who are working with visual display units, which came in with regulations introduced in 1993. Those working with VDUs for more than two hours a day are entitled to a full VDU/eye assessment to be full by their employer.

Comparisons of the cost of screenings vary, because they offer different services. But Bupa's full health monitor, which costs £360 for men and £360 for women, begins with a medical screen and consultation with a physician. At least 40 individual medical tests such as lung function, muscle strength, estimation of body fat and blood profile are carried out.

Nuffield's package of check-ups includes the full male screen, with a prostate cancer test, for £314, and full female screen, including mammography, for £362. The company's "Well man" screen, including prostate cancer test, is priced at £140, and the "Well woman" including mammography, £155. Nuffield also offers a full male screen, including an electrocardiogram taken under exercise at a treadmill, for £391, and for a woman £439.

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Prime Health

You pay less for quality health insurance.

David Loshak offers a guide through the maze of services on offer

A plethora of schemes, plans, options, benefits, discounts, conditions and exclusions is on offer from more than 40 providers of private medical insurance (PMI). Providers include long-established mutual and provident associations, with Bupa still the market leader, and profit-driven insurers such as Guardian Royal Exchange, which recently acquired PPP Healthcare and has 22 per cent of the PMI market.

Both new subscribers and those switching plans because of changed personal, family or financial circumstances should consider seeking independent advice. The small print will almost always exclude pre-existing conditions — not always easily defined — and usually much else.

PMI should be seen as a supplement to the NHS, not a substitute. Complex operations or intensive aftercare are beyond the scope of most independent hospitals. Usually, cover is available only for acute, relatively short-term, curable conditions. That has become a big consideration for subscribers aged over 60. Thanks to Gordon Brown's removal of tax relief on premiums, PMI may prove unaffordable for many of them.

Nevertheless, 6.5 million people have PMI cover. What can they get for their money?

PMI falls into three main sectors. Corporate schemes negotiate and pay for health cover for staff, usually at a discount. In voluntary group schemes, employees pay for cover arranged through the company, usually at discounted rates. With individual schemes, smaller firms, self-employed people and private individuals arrange and pay for their own cover.

Policies under a variety of brand names provide three levels of cover, but there are many distinctions. Premium policies are the most comprehensive and therefore the most expensive. PPP Healthcare's Platinum plan covers most medical contingencies, with many extra benefits, including premium waivers when there is long-term illness, cash benefits for disability or critical illness and cover for long-term conditions such as kidney failure, psychiatric illness and infertility. A single person aged 30 would pay £160 a month and a young family of four £516.

Standard policies are less comprehensive and therefore cheaper. Norwich Union's Trust Care scheme, costing a typical family of four £83 a month, includes consultations and treatment at "approved" hospitals, minor GP surgery, limited hospice care, hospital accommodation for a parent accompanying a child and maternity cash benefit. Among its exclusions are drug abuse, including alcoholism, but some insurers de-



As you grow older, you may find yourself increasingly in need of the best possible medical help

Making the right choice

fray the costs of treating drug addiction or dependency.

Budget policies, some costing less than £20 a month, cover basic essentials or specified procedures. Among their features are no-claims bonuses, discounts for healthy lifestyle, or benefits only when the NHS waiting time exceeds six weeks. WPA's 2-4-1 scheme offers unlimited cover for any costs over a subscriber's agreed personal contribution. Other cost-control approaches include managed care, which aims to provide best value for money to company schemes through tight cost agreements with hospitals, length of stay guidelines and use of day-care facilities.

Traditionally, PMI has been seen only in terms of the costs of schemes. Managed Care programmes look at total cost-effectiveness to the employer and the savings which flow from PMI's

impact on sickness absence, pension and disability costs. Managed care also entails "preferred provider networks" of private facilities, in both independent hospitals and NHS payed and specialist units, which they commend to subscribers to achieve higher-quality care for lower premiums.

The chief problem for subscribers, potential subscribers and the PMI market generally is ever-higher premiums. Control of hospital charges and medical fees has held unit costs below the retail price index, but overall costs are rising by 10 per cent annually, three times faster than general inflation.

Kenneth Clarke's 4 per cent insurance premium tax has not helped, but a more important reason is that new, more costly procedures are available. At the same time cost-conscious GPs and hospital trusts are encouraging

patients to use their PMI if they have it.

Peter Owen, PPP Healthcare's chief executive, argues that because people realise that the NHS will never be able to meet all their healthcare demands and expectations, they are increasingly looking to the private sector.

The PMI market may have stalled for three years but the private healthcare insurance market has soared — by 50 per cent in hospital cash plans, 60 per cent in dental cover, 70 per cent in the income replacement schemes and 200 per cent in critical illness insurance.

Peter Owen says: "It is private healthcare in the round — High Street pharmacies, health information phone lines, nursing homes, mail order vitamins and the gym as well as private hospitals — that drives the industry now."

Home or away: an issue as you age

When experts are asked to list the strengths and weaknesses of long-term care, they hesitate over the former. But there are strengths, not least the diversity of provision, according to Les Bright, deputy general manager of the charity Care and Counsel. Quality and standards, too, have gradually been raised as a result of statutory regulation.

Weaknesses, however, are more widely recognised, which is why a Royal Commission is looking into long-term care, what is needed and how it is paid for. Long-term care can mean providing a range of services for people — young or old — to remain in their own homes. It may indicate respite care in a residential or nursing home, to give friends or relatives a break, or it may mean full-time care.

Various reviews have suggested that old people would prefer to remain at home, with help increased as necessary. An NOP survey, carried out last year throughout Britain among 400 homeowners aged between 60 and 75 for PPP Healthcare, suggests that fewer than a third wanted to live in a private nursing home, and only a quarter in a state home. Both options, however, were more attractive than living with family or friends.

Full-time care is expensive. Residential or nursing homes can cost from £12,000 to £20,000 or more a year. Two hours' daily nursing care at home can cost more than £5,000 annually. More than three-quarters of those questioned in the NOP survey thought the State should bear the cost, and most resented the thought of selling their homes to pay for it. Half also thought it likely that they would need nursing care at some time.

But it is likely that people will not receive help at home until it becomes pressing, as funds are concentrated on those whose needs are greatest, such as the frail, elderly, the sick or the handicapped.

More public funding is unlikely. Provision is already a lottery. More important than needs is where you live — and the financial state of your local authority. There is no national criterion to set the level of service you should get, or when. One area may provide respite care and home services, another may not. Local authorities have long imposed scales of charges, for home help, for example.

Means testing is widespread and few state benefits are available to people on middle incomes without a means test.



Care at home or in a communal residential facility: difficult choice

Pat Blair examines a dilemma for the State, the providers of private facilities and families

Desmond Le Grys, chairman of the Continuing Care Conference, a coalition of interested organisations that includes banks, insurers and charities such as Age Concern, says: "Increasingly, local authorities have to make their eligibility requirements more restrictive." About 70 per cent of care is actually provided informally by family and friends, he adds.

According to Peter Gatenby, an actuary and director of PPP Life-time Care, which has about 60 per cent of the long-term care insurance market, fewer than 1 per cent of people aged more than 60 take out long-term care insurance — 25,000 out of about 7.5 million.

Many older people are apparently waiting until the Royal Commission's findings are made known before making a decision. Yet it is unlikely to report before next January, never mind when any recommendations may be implemented.

Many services are available if you have enough money. These include home nursing and social

care; small family-run care homes; larger commercial homes with resident care managers and homes catering for particular ethnic, occupational or religious clients. Many are excellent, in both public and private sectors.

Health and local authorities have reduced their provision over the past 20 years, and there are now five times as many private beds as public provision, although most are paid for from public funds.

By law, local authorities must inspect and register residential homes, and publish the results. Health authorities similarly register nursing homes, although their reports have until now been confidential. The Government, though, is committed to their publication, and also aims to raise standards through strengthened regulations.

But while residential care is regulated, no legislation covers domiciliary care, or those who provide it, an omission being addressed by the Government.

Pat Blair reports on the need for all employers to monitor staff health

If you suffer from back pain through work, do you know whether your colleagues have a similar problem? More to the point, is your employer aware that certain problems are more prevalent than in other similar companies?

The chances are that few employers know how healthy, or not, their workforce is — or of any patterns of ill health among their staff — unless they have sought to find out. Yet it can be done, and with the Government now encouraging greater attention to health in the workplace, through the discussion document published last week, *Our Healthier Nation*, this is the time to take stock.

One way is through a health audit of staff. These questionnaire-based surveys

A pain in the business — for everybody

aim to provide an overall picture of health in the workplace. Importantly, the personal lifestyle information provided voluntarily by individual staff to an independent body — an internal occupational health service or an external provider of such services — must be, and be seen to be, confidential and not available to management. What the responsible em-

ployer needs to know is the global picture. Are large numbers of employees suffering from muscle or bone problems? Does a particular type of job seem to engender tension?

When the employer has such information, he or she is in a better position to buy in the services staff need, rather than to provide benefits by guesswork.

Possibly one of the biggest exercises in the country is Q Health, a project being conducted by the Post Office. Sixty thousand of its 180,000 workforce have already completed questionnaires. In return they have received a personal health profile, based on their answers, and a health manual for personal use, sent to their homes.

The data being gathered on its behalf by Bupa is not available to Post Office management, or even to its occupational health staff. But, according to Dr Richard Welch, chief medical adviser of the Post Office's Employee Health Services, the overall information gained is likely to be used as a basis for targeting health initiatives for the next year or two.

"At the moment," he says,

"we are crunching the data to find out what the target is."

Already, however, they have realised that about half of male employees aged over 50 have not had their blood pressure checked for a long time.

Lost working time in Britain — at eight days per employee — is estimated to total about 171 million days a year.

The government document *Our Healthier Nation* cites examples of the results of better information and targeting, such as the case of a car manufacturer that took advice when it was realised that certain employees were reporting elbow and shoulder pain. It said: "A redesign of the equipment cost only £20,000 but increased productivity by 6 per cent and improved the health of the employees."

In a second case, a hospital reduced by a third the working hours lost after introducing an occupational health management approach to lifting and moving patients.

Many healthcare providers — Bupa and PPP are but two — will carry out such audits for companies, large and small, as the starting point for employers to decide which health issues they should consider — and which services would be most appropriate for their staff.

The Government is promising to produce, through the Health and Safety Commission, a consultation paper on a ten-year strategy for occupational health. Perhaps a start might be made by discovering just how healthy the workforce is.

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[illegible]

Action man for a new generation

Most Hollywood actors would be happy with one film in the pipeline; Morgan Freeman has three. Lesley O'Toole reports

Steven Spielberg's new movie *Amistad* is "an event", enthuses Morgan Freeman. Set in 1839, the film is the essentially true story of 53 African slaves being transported to America on the ship *Amistad* who rebel against their captors. Freeman plays the abolitionist Theodore Jackson — "I think he's a composite of several people" — and was sought out for the role by Spielberg himself. Though Freeman, 60, likes to make no more than two films a year and was about to embark on a sailing vacation after fulfilling 1996's quota, he leapt at the opportunity. "It's like being summoned by the President. It's a special Spielberg on top of that. When these things come your way, and believe me it's not very often, it is always a special event. Money doesn't even come into it."

Born in Memphis, Freeman has spent much of his life in America's South and, inevitably, can trace his own roots back to a time he calls "just one more sad statement of man's inhumanity to man. My great-great-grandmother was a Virginia slave so this is an important part of my heritage." Despite the impressive coterie of co-stars and directors who bolster his CV, Freeman seems particularly in awe of Spielberg, with whom he had never previously worked. "You can tell by the way a watchmaker handles your watch that he's a professional and it's the same with Steven. When he works, he becomes the master magician. He's fun to watch and to be with and, although he's all business, he is always approachable."

Freeman isn't the first director of note to request Freeman's services. Paul Newman hired him in 1983 for his film *Harry and Son* after discovering that Freeman was not exactly flooded with offers. "He said, 'That's criminal', and hired me. I bloomed early, it's just that so few people bothered to notice."

Stage one of Freeman's career trajectory had seemed promising. His first acting job in a play off-

Broadway paid him "\$70 a week. I remember the figure because I'd been working as a clerk-typist earning \$60 a week so to make more as an actor was unbelievable." The only offices he has set foot in since belong to his "people": agents, managers, publicists and studios hoping to secure his services.

His sleazy pimp in 1987's *Street Smart* launched his Hollywood career proper, earning him his first of three Oscar nominations (the others were for *Driving Miss Daisy* and *The Shawshank Redemption*).

In recent years Freeman has enjoyed something of a lucrative career sideline, playing wise father-figure to a plethora of Hollywood's A-list talent in a series of action thrillers. Since *Seven* paired him with Brad Pitt to huge commercial success, Freeman has starred with Keanu Reeves in *Chain Reaction*. Now he is appearing opposite Ashley Judd in *Kiss the Girls*, which topped the US box office for several weeks last year (it opens in Britain on March 6), and with Christian Slater in *Hard Rain* (which opens in Britain in April), which *didn't*. The formula has mostly proved successful, a fact Freeman attributes to "chemistry, pure and simple. It has nothing to do with sex or youth. I'm basic black and I go well with most things."

He won't, though, be paired with any young Tom. Dick or Hollywood Harry. "I will not work with people whose work I do not already greatly admire. But I have to say, these action thrillers are fun. They're the kind of movies that fuelled my imagination as a child so I want to be part of that process for a whole new generation."

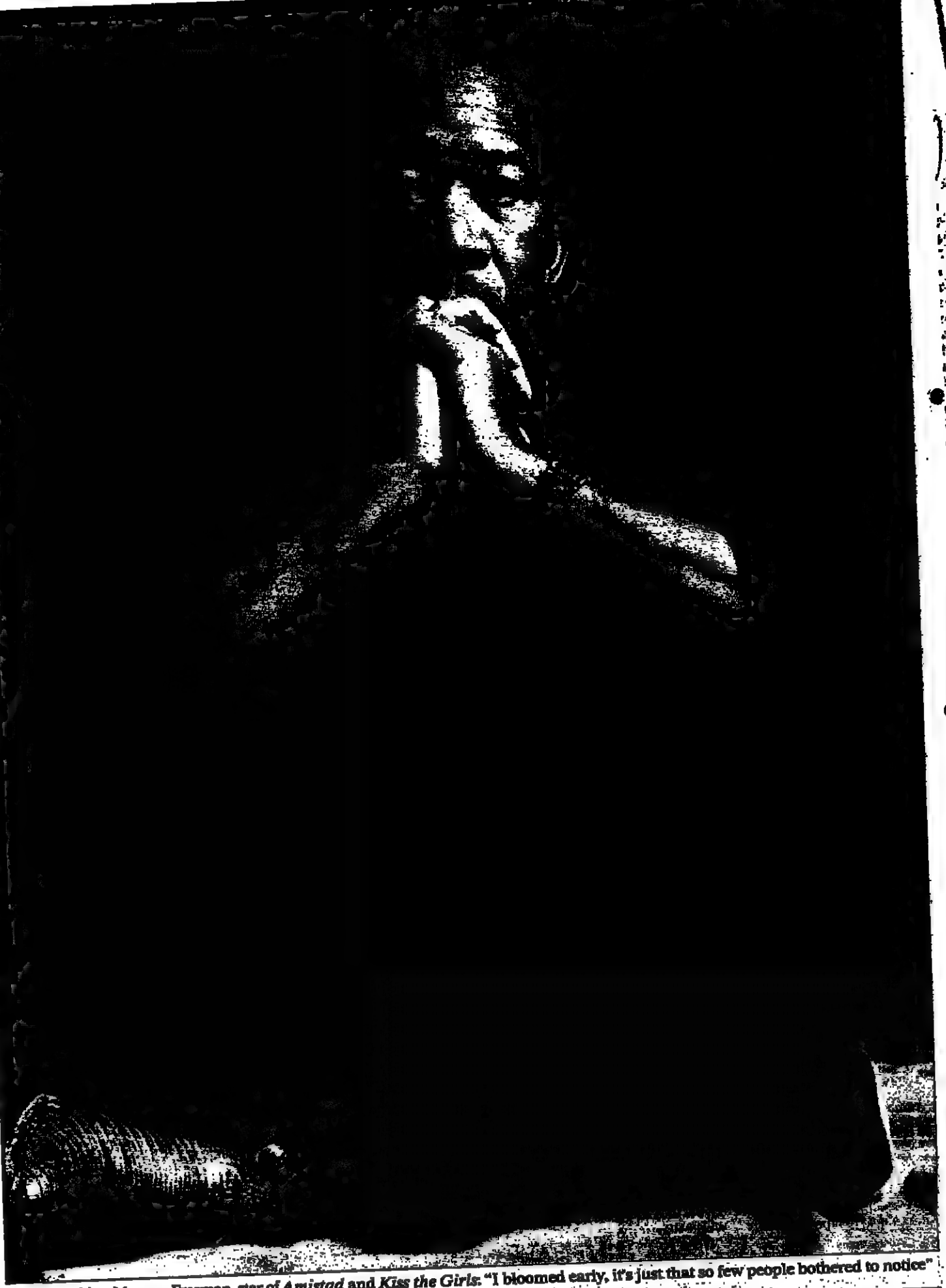
Kiss the Girls, like *Seven*, sees Freeman on the trail of a serial killer, but he is keen to emphasise that the similarity ends there. "I just don't understand this constant talk about *Seven* and *Kiss the Girls*," he raves in a mock tirade. "In *Seven* I'm old, jaded and burnt-out, and in *Kiss the Girls* I'm a hotshot doctor of forensic psychology. The lines are different, the co-star is different, the location is different."

Hard Rain, meanwhile, was filmed in somewhat unconventional environs: inside the biggest artificial water tank ever built. While his co-star Minnie Driver has admitted to being "miserable for five months" (the shoot's duration), Freeman never moans about working conditions. "One does not go through everything one goes through to get work to then complain about it. That's ridiculous. If I was a member of the crew on *Hard Rain*, I'm sure I would have complained bitterly, but I wasn't the one standing neck-deep in water for 14 or 15 hours a day."

Next on Freeman's slate is his second directing job. In 1993 he directed *Bopha*, a drama set in South Africa which accrued very little at the US box office. "I made a pretty good movie. It's just not the kind of story American audiences flock to because they don't care what's happening in South Africa." He is ready to begin directing *A Day No Pigs Would Die*, which his own company is producing. "It's a coming of age story from a nice little Robert Peck book."

If the film is sufficiently financed, Freeman will once more forgo his annual sailing trip. "I stop riding when the hunting season starts: I hang up my saddle and go sailing. Now I can't even do that." He shakes his head and laughs, aware of musing like an over-paid, over-cosseted movie star. "I know, it's rough, but I think I can handle it."

● *Amistad* opens in Britain on Feb 27



Hard-working Morgan Freeman, star of *Amistad* and *Kiss the Girls*: "I bloomed early, it's just that so few people bothered to notice"

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B E L I E V E

FAIRYTALE

A TRUE STORY

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF GULLIVER'S TRAVELS

FROM TOMORROW ACROSS THE COUNTRY

Turn up, thrash out, drop off

Back in the days before Britpop, Sleeper seemed like a great idea. Imagine it: a trio of quiet guys fronted by a sassy chick mouthing off about anything and anyone who took her fancy. The world was their one-night stand, and the fancies of latter-day Girl Power could take a running jump. But when you finally heard their breathless stream of two-minute wonders they told a slightly different story, and you realised that once the novelty of *Swallow and Delicious* wore off, Sleeper were as well-behaved as the slices of suburban yearning Louise Wener sung about.

Wener was like a kid who got lucky on the karaoke and decided to make a career of it. Fortunately, after *Inbetweeners* hit the charts, everyone wanted to be her best mate. Girls aped her feistiness, while blokes rather dumbly thought

POP

they had been given licence to ogle. Even now, after difficult their third album, *Pleased to Meet You*, a much-delayed tour, public cooking about maturity and oodles of press speculation over the band's future, Wener and Co still manage to bound on stage like puppy dogs on heat. A back-dropp bears the legend *The Beginning*.

Then the fleshed out six-piece line-up gets to work, storming through half a dozen songs in the time it takes to listen to an Oasis B-side. They go at it hell for leather, the hits coming fast and at times a tad too furious. Which is fine if bouncy, listener-friendly lane



Louise Wener: still in thrall to late-Seventies power pop

Seventies power pop's your thing. It clearly is for Wener, who pines for the neon-lit stage like techno never happened.

This is not to suggest that Sleeper are Luddites, just that their musical palette is so limited and, live at least, so bombastically obvious, that

any individuality between songs only comes by way of Wener's typically plaintive vocals. Not even when a silver curtain takes centre stage for the Top Ten success *Sale of the Century* does the pace let up.

But when Wener straps on a guitar for *Inbetweeners* it all makes sense, and you realise that she's a Suzi Quatro for the Nineties backed by a Transvision Vamp with brains. You can't help but be charmed by Sleeper's boundless enthusiasm, but where they try so hard to be Blondie, they end up as the long-forgotten Photos.

Sleeper will always be average but, as the horde of Louise allies at Glasgow's Barrowland — only some, significantly, with men in tow — would probably testify, they are sound great after a few beers.

NEIL COOPER

Team works

JAZZ

Manu Dibango

Rocking Saxes

AROUND the world in 70 minutes. Though Cameroon's Manu Dibango will probably always be known as the saxophonist who created the dancefloor hit *Soul Makossa*, his music is anything but one-dimensional. Anyone who was sceptical about the wisdom of booking him into Ronnie Scott's need not have worried. Dibango, who first acquired a taste for jazz as a teenager back in the Forties, is an infinitely adaptable, cosmopolitan musician. The last time I saw him, about a year ago, he was returning to his church roots in a South Bank concert with the London Community Gospel Choir.

This time, with a small but perfectly formed multinational band in tow, he goes on a near-seamless "musical safari" of the Western hemisphere, from Martinique to Harlem and West Africa. Dancing shoes are not required.

What made the opening set particularly attractive, was that it was so clearly a collective effort. Rather than blowing conventional solos, Dibango's horn tended to weave terse patterns around the guitar of Jerry MacKenzie and the restless electric bass of Noel Ekwabi. More than most saxophonists he brings a vocal quality to his playing.

Moving from one motif to another — all embellished by Frederic Gaillardet's keyboards — this was a performance that followed its internal rhythms. It did not take long to adjust to the group's body clock as it moved from, say, the languid Caribbean pulse of *Parfum des Iles* to a frenetic salsa piano riff. In any case the potent but flawlessly controlled drumming of Nicolas Filiatreau was always on hand to supply a rallying point.

In an astute double bill, Dibango plays opposite the trio of the pianist Jonathan Gee, who is on the first stage of a national tour. Gee is another eclectic talent who mixes *Bye Bye Blackbird* with the resolutely modern sounds of the Brazilian songwriter Ivan Lins. The lyricism is balanced by forceful extended dialogues with the drummer Winston Clifford.

CLIVE DAVIS

Friends in deed

RAY BRYANT TRIO

Tribute to Jazz Piano Friends

(VOC 9031-2)

THE "friends" are mostly fellow pianists against whom the septagenarian Ray Bryant has run up in the course of his lengthy and distinguished career, beginning with Duke Ellington and concluding with Joe Zawinul. The former is represented by his *C Jam Blues*, the latter by a tasteful acoustic version of *Birdland*.

In between Bryant focuses his unashamedly accessible, deceptively easygoing technique on a broad range of pieces, from Dave Brubeck's lightly tripping *The Duke*, through some outright pop radio-friendly material — Vince Guaraldi's *Cast Your Fate to the Wind*, Billy Page's *The "In" Crowd* — to hard-bop staples such as Horace Silver's *Doodlin'* and Bobby Timmons's *Moodin'*.

Whatever the material, though, Bryant, discreetly backed by bassist Ray Drummond and drummer Winard Harper, brings a wealth of jazz experience to it, judiciously balancing his characteristic improvisational subtlety with just enough gospelly brio to appeal to jazz aficionados and casual listener alike.

JAZZ ALBUMS

LOS ANGELES

JAZZ QUARTET

Look to the East

(Naxos Jazz 85009-2)

SINCE its adoption by John Scofield and Joe Lovano, and by Lovano's and Bill Friel's the Paul Motian Trio, the pairing of tenor saxophone and electric guitar as frontline instruments has become relatively common in contemporary jazz.

The Los Angeles Jazz Quartet skillfully exploits the textural contrast between Larry Koonse's neat, fluent, single-note guitar soloing and Chuck Manning's smokily evocative tenor sound, but the overall attraction of the quartet's music lies chiefly in the sly, gance and cogency of their original material, from bassist Derek Oleszkiewicz's sly, nately brooding and lauding themes, to drummer Kevin Tullius's slow-building ballads.

The result is a refined, polished but lively contemporary mainstream album from a consistently intelligent, stimulating band.

CHRIS PARKER

NEW MOVIES: Kevin Kline and Tom Selleck put their macho images on the line in *In & Out*. Geoff Brown is charmed

Very funny how he never married

Oscar night, Glenn Close announces the Best Actor prize. The fictitious Cameron Drake, played by Matt Dillon, gives an indulgent acceptance speech, much like Tom Hanks in the year he won with *Philadelphia*. Praise is heaped particularly on Cameron's English teacher back in Greenleaf, Indiana. Then he adds the icing on the cake: "and he's gay!"

Cut to a gobsmacked Greenleaf, watching the ceremony on television. For this English teacher, played by Kevin Kline, it's a straight: indeed, it stands on the verge of marriage to his long-term fiancée (Jan Cusack). He is neatly dressed, with a fussy manner and limpid wrists. He loves poetry and worships Barbara Strisand. But gay?

In & Out is a mainstream comedy, directed by the former *Muppet* man Frank Oz and written by Paul Rudnick (he wrote *Jerry*, both play and film). They use broad characterisations and feel-good tricks to generate the kind of film that Greenleaf's good citizens would enjoy themselves. Those who want graphic action must look elsewhere, perhaps to the ICA, where the controversial *Sick: The Life & Death of Bob Flanagan, Supermasochist* opens this week. There is nothing very controversial about Kevin Kline: prissy riding a bicycle, faintly delectable Strisand in *Funny Lady* ("It was a sequel! She was under contract!"), even being kissed by Tom Selleck (a gay TV reporter eager to escort Kline out of the closet).

To compensate, there are funny lines, endearing performances and good-hearted feelings. Kline's school principal, played by Bob Newhart, may have trouble saying the very word "homosexual", but the film asks us to accept everyone and not make judgments.

Kline is in his element as the teacher tormented by questioning from his fiancée, his mother (Debbie Reynolds), his pupils and, not least, himself. Kline never beats the big stick, but carries off his jokes gracefully: he is particularly winning trying out a "poor man's masculinity" tape (he falls utterly).

Dillon, too, is on his best behaviour as the Hollywood but bubbling over with affection for Kline; and the film's dawning pace picks up once he drives into town with a bikini girlfriend so used to LA that she cannot fathom the fiddling circle on an old motel telephone.

Having gained speed, the film then hits a common problem with comedies: how do you end it? Rudnick's

In & Out

Empire, 12, 91 mins
Could Kevin Kline possibly be gay?

Fairytale: A True Story

Warner West End
U, 98 mins
Muddled drama about the Cottingley fairies

Joseph Conrad's The Secret Agent

Virgin Haymarket
12, 95 mins
Funereal version of Conrad's anarchist tale

The Blackout

Curzon Phoenix
18, 99 mins
Abel Ferrara tests your patience

Sick: The Life & Death of Bob Flanagan, Supermasochist

ICA Cinema, 90 mins
Remarkable portrait of a remarkable man

Downtime

Warner West End
15, 90 mins
Never use a lift in a British tower block

solution, set mostly during the school's graduation ceremonies, is sentimental enough to recall Frank Capra: but when so many films delight in showing that life is hell, an excess of warm feeling towards community and family must be counted merely a minor vice.

In & Out knows clearly what it is doing. *Fairytale: A True Story* never reaches a decision. Different ingredients and attitudes are thrown before us; the story flits about almost as much as the fairies claimed to have been photographed in 1917 by two Yorkshire cousins, Frances Griffith and Elsie Wright. Their snaps certainly impressed Arthur Conan Doyle, his fellow spiritualist and all others anxious about the afterlife in the dark days during and after the First World War.

Here is a fascinating tale for cinema to tell; but this American production, filmed in Britain by Mr. *Brideshead Revisited*, Charles Sturridge, misses its chance, much like its rival *Photographing Fairies*, a fictional variation inspired by the same events.

One of the problems is script organisation. Up in Yorkshire, in Cottingley, the film busies itself with the cousins' photographs, the business of wonder and the reactions of adults:



Kevin Kline, as the prissy teacher outed at the Academy Awards, repels the advances of an amorous journalist—Tom Selleck—in Frank Oz's gently charming *In & Out*

Paul McGann is dubious about the fairies' existence, while Phoebe Nicholls aches to believe. Meanwhile down in London, Conan Doyle and the escapologist Harry Houdini thrash out the supernatural pros and cons in learned debate, although these historical figures loom less large than the personalities of their impersonators. Peter O'Toole and Harvey Keitel.

Both adults and children are liable to be confused by the jostling of characters and moods. On screen, fairies land wins: thanks to seamless effects work and ingenious costumes by Shirley Russell, the fairies dart like Edwardian dragonflies, warming the hearts of all believers. In real life, the sceptics won, for the cousins themselves eventually admitted in old age that the photos were fakes. On screen, despite conscientious work from Sturridge's cast, the design team and the composer, Zbigniew Preisner, no one wins.

Artistic success is in short supply, too, in Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent*, an unprepossessing adaptation by Christopher Hampton of the Conrad novel about London anarchists (the basis for Hitchcock's *Saboteur*). There are several miniature pleasures. Robin Williams, unbilled, is surprisingly bearable in his chilling appearance as bomb supplier to the anarchists lurking in London's cobbled Victorian maze ("To the destruction of what is," he drinks).

Then there is *London* itself, as recreated by production designer Caroline Amies. The rain pours down on to seedy streets. Furtive figures scurry about under umbrellas. It looks impressive, but gives an audience no escape: you feel you are locked overnight in

some museum's Victorian Experience.

Just occasionally Hampton, who writes and directs, gives scenes a little dramatic meat. Consider the exchanges between Bob Hoskins's mousy agent provocateur and his young wife (Patricia Arquette) when they grasp the personal consequences of the bomb attack on Greenwich's Royal Observatory. Suddenly, briefly, people matter. But for the most part this *Secret Agent*, completed as long ago as 1996, is all gloom and doom, an inert account of a famous novel that never encourages us to make connections with terrorism today. After the constipated *Carrington* and this, Hampton seems further away than ever from mastering the mysteries of cinema.

The director Abel Ferrara knows the mysteries all right, but abuses them. At least he does in *The Blackout*, a ferociously maddening erotic thriller about a self-destructive film star who escapes from Hollywood problems by blacking out in Miami after a festival of drink and drugs.

Matthew Modine copes well with his utterly unsympathetic role. Other actors have a harder time wading through the depravity, filmed by Ferrara with the glitter of high art but the instincts of a porn merchant. Beatrice Dalle twiddles her thumbs; Dennis Hopper, a Miami club owner, goes way over the top; Claudia Schiffer, in her acting debut, goes way under as another of Modine's women.

Compared to *The Blackout*,

Sick: The Life & Death of Bob Flanagan, Supermasochist appears quite a wholesome little film. True, you see (or avert your eyes from) a penis nailed to a board. True, you see Flanagan—American performance artist, stand-up comic, poet, lifelong sufferer from cystic fibrosis—subject most of his other body parts to piercings, pendulous weights and other means of inducing pain. But there is a reason for all this. We learn things, we feel things; principally about living with death, which Flanagan did every day as mucus built up in his lungs. (He died a month before production ended, in 1996.)

Flanagan's response, exhaustively documented in Kirby Dick's film, was to fight pain with pain, sado-masoch-

istically applied. Doing this, he explains in a poem at the end, made him feel "invincible... triumphant".

Did we need 90 minutes to reach this epiphany? Not exactly. By their nature, sado-masochistic acts tend to be repetitive and, for all the attractions of Flanagan's unbridled candour, you long for the portrait to be shorter and rounder, less awestruck by the spectacle on show. You fitch to hear more from Flanagan's parents ("Where was I?" his mother keeps repeating, wondering how her son kept so much secret), or share more thoughtful moments between him and Sherree Rose, his partner. But *Sick* is still a remarkable document, a voyage into one man's pain and psyche, bracing and un-

comfortable all at once. This crazy week brings a pile of other films, mostly doomed to a brief existence in some multiplex shoebox. Critical words seem immaterial to *Paws* (an Australian doggie saga, featuring the voice of Billy Connolly) or the American fast-food comedy *Good Burger*, or *Mortal Kombat II: Annihilation*. But *This Is the Sea* (Metro, Rupert Street), Mary McGuckian's tale of Irish lovers crossing the religious divide, deserves attention for its depth of feeling and excellent cast.

So does *Downtime*, directed by Bharat Nalluri, a game attempt to bring the *Die Hard* kind of action to a decrepit British tower block terrorised by kids. Catch them before they vanish.

Geoff Brown

A laugh a minute

Every week, young film fans discuss the latest releases...

IN & OUT
Daphne Samuel, 20: Kevin Kline gives the best performance of his career apart from *On a Fish Called Wanda*. Deliciously delightful.

Sarah Crook, 18: A laugh a minute.

Leslie (Isiah Thomas, 20: Jean Cusack is just superb in this mildly amusing movie. Unfortunately the film is overpowered by too much schmaltz.

Carl Clark, 19: It gets a bit soppy but the actors are all great, even Tom Selleck.

DOWNTIME
Daphne Samuel, 20: Dark and gritty are the midwords that describe this film, but perhaps dull is a better one. Sarah: let downtown to see

SNAP VERDICT

Downtime. A great British action thriller. Leslie: A really wicked movie. I thought my heart was going to burst through my chest. Carl: You'll never take a lift again. Absolutely heart-stopping.

FAIRYTALE: A TRUE STORY. Daphne Samuel, 20: Boring, tedious tosh that excited me as much as the bus journey to the cinema. Sarah: A beautiful and enchanting film that children will adore. Leslie: A gentle, beautiful movie. A perfect half-term treat for any good boy or girl. Carl: An absolute pleasure. Will provide enjoyment for children and adults alike.

★★★★ "a serious, brainy and highly entertaining film - the best kind of popular cinema" *William the Conqueror*

★★★★ "brilliantly predatory and shockingly uncompromising" *London - The Big Screen*

"stunning...enthralling...registers on the moral scale like a social earthquake" *London - Evening Standard*

in the company of **men.**

written and directed by Neil LaBute

★★★★★★★★

now showing ABC PAVILION ABC PAVILION RITZY starts tomorrow

Near-human Bean an acquired taste

BEAN
PolyGram, PG, 1997

ROWAN ATKINSON'S nearest bumbler Mr Bean arrives on the screen with a loosened tongue, a few spurious hints of humanity and a glamorous Los Angeles setting (inducements to attract the American audience). The plot is not the sturdiest: Bean, a lowly employee at the National Gallery, is sent to dignify the American unveiling of the painting of Whistler's Mother. Those who care for Bean will get 90 minutes' worth of face-polling, sneezing and rude noises. Those who do not should rent another movie.

ADDICTED TO LOVE
Warner, 15, 1997

ROMANTIC comedies are not supposed to leave a nasty taste, but it's hard to watch Matthew Broderick and Meg Ryan's spurned lovers come together to spy on their former partners without feeling queasy. Broderick pedals his usual charm, while Ryan tries being hard and cynical instead of a dizzy dame (it does not work). Their behaviour seems mean and childish; this makes it hard to smile fondly when romance finally flickers between them. Available to rent.

COLD COMFORT FARM
VCI, PG, 1994

JOHN SCHLESINGER'S adaptation of Stella Gibbons's spoof rural melodrama, originally made for TV, breezes through the story of the Starkadder family, mired in gloom and doom. Kate Beckinsale brings a brisk, no-nonsense charm to the role of heroine Flora Poste, trying to bring her eccentric relatives to heel. There is Eileen Atkins as the grief-stricken Judith; Rufus Sewell, pushing too hard as the smouldering Seth; and Freddie Jones, clearing dishes with a twig. Modestly successful and available to rent and buy.

NEW ON VIDEO

NIGHT FALLS ON MANHATTAN
First Independent, 15, 1997

OTHER directors may go for fireworks, but Sidney Lumet likes things plain and simple, with clean, observant photography, predominantly in New York locations. The style is

well suited to this absorbing drama about district attorneys, lawyers and cops, caught in a moral quagmire.

THE INCREDIBLY TRUE ADVENTURES OF TWO GIRLS IN LOVE
VCI, 15, 1996

CINEMATICALLY gauche but sweet tale of first love among teenage lesbians.

Leibman as his mentor and Richard Dreyfuss as a liberal defence attorney. A rental release.

made on a shoestring budget. The script, by director Maria Maggenti, is very hit-and-miss, though her two lead actors, Laurel Holloman and Nicole Parker, have enough natural charm to survive most of the hazards they have to face, even quotations from Walt Whitman.

Geoff Brown

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The hole inside the outsider

Did even Terence Rattigan, whose life leaked often into his drama, write a more fully autobiographical play than this, the last of his illustrious career? Like his Tony Davenport, he too was the son of a frigid, possessive mother and a diplomat prone to launching himself into casual affairs. He too tried to escape a homosexual youth by having a cataclysmic fling with a prostitute. He too got no joy from the encounter, only self-hatred and what Tony calls "a filthy, disgusting disease" the clap.

Yet this is merely the subplot of a play whose main action takes one still nearer Rattigan's troubled heart. This involves Alma Rattigan, who had the ill fortune to live in the Bournemouth of 1934, not the most comfortable place or period when your boy-lover splinters your elderly husband's head with a mallet. Rattigan knew what it meant to be the sexual outsider and the victim of dangerous needs and destructive passions. He had even been in the erotic power of a wayward young actor called Ken Morgan, somewhat as middle-aged Alma is in the power of George Wood, the 17-year-old she imported into her house as factotum and chauffeur.

But it is an author's job to transform personal experience into potent drama; and, consistently enjoyable though Neil Bartlett's revival is, nobody could pretend that Rattigan was as successful at doing this in *Cause Célèbre* as he had been in his most famous play about the inequalities of love, *The Deep Blue Sea*. The problem is not just that the subplot and the main plot are artificially yoked together. It is that by giving time to each he deals fully with neither.

Would you, believe that Tony's chilly mum, her vicious hatred of corrupters of youth intensifying when she realises her son has VD, is elected forewoman of the jury trying Alma? No, nor did I, despite the quiet authority Diane Fletcher brings to the role. And even if one blinks and agrees to buy into the pretence, difficulties remain. Though Nuttall Sharron is perfectly fine in the role, Tony's inner anguish never comes wholly to life. And though Amanda Harris hurls herself still more impressively into the main plot, something is missing in Rattigan's treatment of Alma.

Let's not underrate Rattigan's or Bartlett's adventure-

ness. A black-walled stage switches to and fro to become the Rattigan house, the Davenport house and the Old Bailey. At one moment John Quentin has to sneak off the judge's seat and doff his red robes to put in a brief appearance as the murderer. That does not prevent Bartlett creating some wonderfully forbidding visual geometry in the courtroom. Still less does it stop Rattigan reminding us of what we should have known from *The Winslow Boy*, that nobody evokes the crackle of examination and cross-examination better than he.

Yet should the scenes involving Neil Stacy as the defence chief really be the strongest in the play? I wanted to see more of poor, stilted, happy-go-lucky, loving, brave, weak Alma and her evolving relationship with Laurence Mitchell's pathetically snobbish, jealous George. Amanda Harris does all that is asked of her, which includes casually tantalising the boy from inside a fluttering pyjama-suit, drunkenly vomiting a copper, and somehow maintaining a fragile, touching dignity under the onslaught of Bournemouth and England's disgust. But she gets too little opportunity to take us far into Alma's stomach and bowels — in other words into the epicentre of Rattigan himself.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE



Weighing the balance of Terence Rattigan's autobiographical play: Amanda Harris, Laurence Mitchell and Neil Stacy

Window dressing for the soul searchers

Were William Wordsworth to be writing this review he might begin with the dimensions of the stage: I've measured it from side to side: 'Tis twelve foot long, and fifteen wide. Then he could marvel, as I do, that Polly Meynell's design fits five Manhattan apartments into this little space.

I notice from her blog, though, that she is used to working in miniature. Last year's commissions, though in a different medium, include a cope for the Bishop of London and an inauguration cloak for the wife of the Master of the Drapers' Company.

Craig Lucas's hour-long comedy of manners begins in the last few moments before guests set off for nervous Libby's first party. Alice is helping her lover Boo to swot

up on Italian; Tom broods over the song he is composing for the guitar until Emily returns from her office; Norbert silently eats an orange while completing a jigsaw; Grier frenetically exercises.

The noise is horrendous, with manic phone calls between Libby and Grier, and bursts of music from all corners. Possibly we are not expected to note everything said, though the writing is cunningly counterpointed to swerve the different groups towards the same phrases, and finally to the same chord of "Let's go."

The central area of the play is set in Libby's apartment, after which all the guests go

home except quier, withheld Norbert who lets her tell him something of herself. This scene between Candida Rundle and Nigel Parkin is the nub of the play, and several elements of what has gone before are now gathered together, explaining something of Libby's barely controlled panic and why she keeps a hand over half her mouth.

What she has to say concerns windows and blue sky, and it is no coincidence, though not stressed, that Norbert is a sky-diving instructor.

Meanwhile, a sleepy Emily is also talking of windows: if only we could all be fitted with one so that we could see what other people felt. Coming from one of the faster-talking guests this might sound impossibly cute but, since Emma Tate's Emily has been able to reveal

her feelings in a privately performed song, the window fantasy becomes a natural follow-on. Lucas may be suggesting that superficiality is only skin-deep, but the verbal antics of those who keep their skins on can be exhausting to follow, and here Joe Harrison's direction could be

calmer. The musician plays a plinky-plunk CD by a jazz pianist named Cecil Taylor, who seemingly exists and must be able to close down a party as swiftly as Delius clears vandals from New-carrie.

JEREMY KINGSTON

Murdered by a musical

It comes as a surprise to hear a solo guitar before the lights rise on *Eyes for Consuela*, Sam Shepard's fascinating new play at the Manhattan Theatre Club. Music has always been an integral part of Shepard's repertoire, but earlier plays were linked closely to jazz improvisation and rock's jagged rhythms. Composer José Pérez's gentle strumming suggests a mellower Shepard is at hand.

This is not apparent at first, as David Strathairn's Henry wakes screaming and thrashing his mosquito netting in a seedy room in Mexico. To calm down, Henry takes a night walk into the writer of friends and lianas on Santo Loquasto's jungle set. He is soon facing a bandit with a machete and questions about what a man is and what in life has value. Inspired by an Octavio Paz story, Shepard has written his most accessible play, transmuting the gritty eccentricities of *Buried Child* or *Stones for the Blind* into the lyrical, eerie beauty of magic realism, despite some gruesome elements. The chief one is that the bandit Amado wants to cut out the American's blue eyes to give to his beloved Consuela (Tanya Gayer). Amado's only reward is that "each time I present this gift to Consuela, she will smile slightly."

Actually Henry's eyes are brown, but he has tegulla, so Daniel Faraldo's Amado hangs around since he believes, despite the evidence, that Henry has blue eyes. "My duty is to make my woman happy," he growls, staring at Henry's peepers. Shepard implies Amado's blind faith is superior to Henry's moral floundering.



Race relations: Ednita Nazario and Ruben Blades in Paul Simon's *The Capeman*

NEW YORK SHOWS

"I had concepts," confesses Strathairn's tormented businessman. "I'd make things up in my head."

Strathairn deftly plays the humour, too, backpedalling from a confrontation with psychobabble: "I'm not trying to deny my confusion." What Strathairn leaves unexplored is an allusion to controlling behaviour that has ruined his marriage. For a man possessed of a mean streak, he covers overmuch. Part of that is the fault of director, Terry Kinney.

The ending is unusually affirmative for Shepard, albeit familiar. Real values are intangible, Henry learns. It is a variation on "There's

no place like home", and when Consuela tells Henry that he is standing on the road that will lead him home, the echo from *The Wizard of Oz* is obvious. It is not a less true coming from a middle-aged rebel turned family man. You could do far worse than spend an evening with these characters.

You could, instead, be at *The Capeman*. Paul Simon's musical arrived at the Marriotti Marquis with Mark Morris listed as director/choreographer, though he had already left. Poet Derek Walcott provided the book and often chunky lyrics that, for instance, rhyme "music" with "lose it".

Latin stars Ruben Blades and Marc Anthony play the older and younger Salvador

Agrón, aka the Capeman, a 16-year-old Puerto Rican gang member who murdered two white boys in a notorious 1959 case in New York City. Tom Stoppard might have injected some crackle into their scenes together, but Walcott's exposition weighs down ho-hum tableaux. Worse, Walcott not only gives depth and humanity to Agrón that the teenager surely never had, but distastefully imputes racism to virtually all the white characters, including the victims' mothers.

Simon's music is lively, and in the cast Ednita Nazario as Agrón's aggrieved mother and Sara Ramirez as an Indian woman corresponding with the inmate stand out.

EDWARD KARAM

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The performance itself is, as befits the subject, voluptuous: the Queen Mab Scherzo is glittering and needle-sharp, the Love Scene achingly sensual, Juliet's funeral cortege affectingly doleful.

Catherine Robin and Jean-Paul Fouchécourt are admirable as the mezzo and tenor soloists, but it is Friar Laurence who steals the limelight, in the form of Gilles Cachemaille.

CHAMBER

Hilary Finch

■ **MOZART**
Oboe Quartets
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Harmonia Mundi HMU/
907230 *** £15.99

PAUL GOODWIN, early oboe specialist and associate conductor of the Academy of Ancient Music, tunes his classical oboe with its narrow bore and reed, and delicate, fragile tone, to the high piping of Mozart's K370 Oboe Quartet at the start of this tempting recital. The stringent period instruments of the string trio Terzetto bring a strange, sombre beauty to its plangent slow movement.

It is less than kind, perhaps, to programme the music of

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Louis Masson, the German composer son of a French chef, immediately after Mozart's exquisite work, especially when Masson's Quartet in F really is more icing than cake. And Goodwin's playing only just lifts Carl Stamitz's D major Quartet above the workmanlike.

But Franz Krommer's C major Quartet, discovered in Salzburg, really is fun, with much mischievous duetting with the violin. Goodwin finally takes up a resinsor cor anglais for a beautifully phrased performance of Mozart's K580 Adagio, a grave single-movement work out of which grew the great Ave Verum Corpus.

OPERA

John Higgins

■ **ADAM**
Le Tordador
Suzi Jol/Aler/Tremont/
WNO Orchestre/Bonyng
Decca 455 664-2 *** £15.99

A COUPLE of years back Richard Bonyng and Suzi Jol had a considerable success with a neglected piece by Adam, *Le Tordador*. Together again they match it with an equally neglected opera, *Le Tordador*, by Adam's near contemporary Adolphe Adam.

Adam wrote it at speed to keep the creditors at bay. Money from his greatest hit, *Giselle*, had clearly run out. The score gives no impression of the baillifs thumping at the door. Instead it is sunlit and melodious and the libretto at times is almost witty. The later reworks the familiar story of the old husband (the tordador of the title, very much redneck), the young wife and the new lover. But for once the three end up in a cosy ménage à trois.

The first act has two crackling trios, one devoted to drink and the other to variations on the familiar song *Ah! Vous dirai-je, maman*. The soprano has a hefty display piece after the interval, and Suzi Jol uses all her vocal dexterity here. John Aler is a bit stodgy as her admirer, an itinerant flautist — cue for lots of musical jokes. Michel Tremont is in the best French buffo tradition as a Don Pasquale figure who eventually decides there is not a crowd. Bonyng and the WNO players are excellent.

★ Worth hearing
★★ Worth considering
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The book of exodus

Born of
longing and
tragedy, Israel
is a dream
realised, says
Jonathan Sacks

On September 3, 1899, at the end of the First Zionist Congress, Theodore Herzl made a note in his diary. "At Basle," he wrote, "I said this out loud today, I would be answered by universal laughter. Perhaps in five years, certainly in 50, everyone will know it."

It was one of the more remarkable prophecies of modern times. From the outset, Zionism faced strong opposition within Jewry, quite apart from the tremors it set up within the Arab world. To the religious, for whom the restoration of Jewish sovereignty would be brought about by God, not man, it threatened to secularise Jewish fate. To the more assimilated Jews of the West it raised the spectre of dual loyalties at the very time when they were labouring to prove their integration within the nation-states of Europe. The sheer improbability of gathering together a people

ISRAEL, A HISTORY
By Martin Gilbert
Doubleday, £25
ISBN 0 385 40401 8

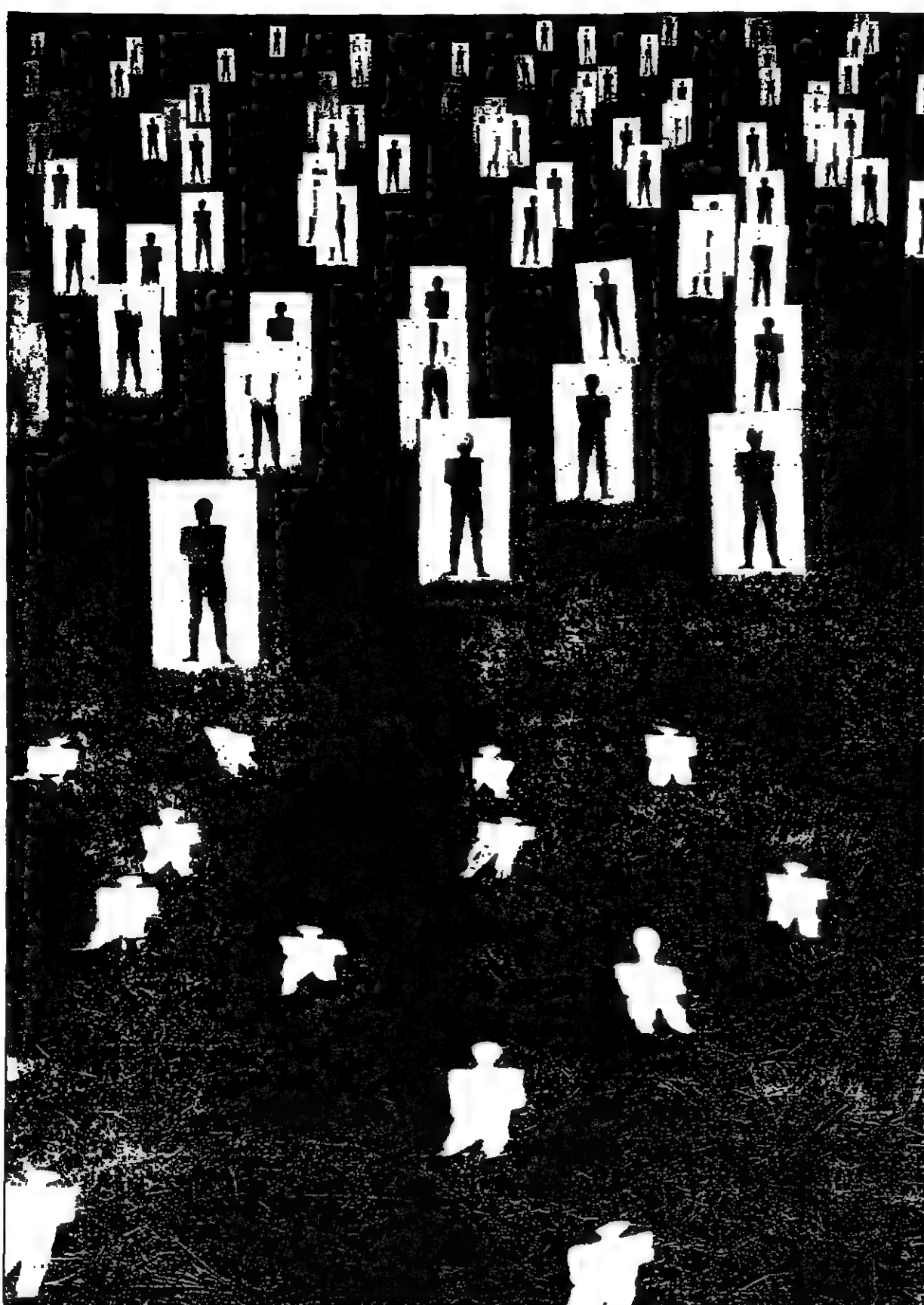
dispersed for almost 2,000 years and turning them into a nation of farmers and soldiers was enough to make many Jews dismiss Zionism as fantasy.

In the event, Herzl's prediction was less than a year out. On May 14, 1948, the state of Israel was proclaimed. By then the Holocaust had exceeded his worst fears about the fate of Jews in Europe. Jews knew that they needed a home, a refuge, a defensible space. Israel was the product of a dream and a nightmare, the biblical dream of the return to Zion, the nightmare of European anti-Semitism. From that strange combination of ancient longing and modern tragedy the "old-new land" was born.

It is difficult to write dispassionately about Israel, so strong are the feelings it arouses among critics and friends alike. But that is what Martin Gilbert has done in his magisterial new history of the state, written to mark its 50th anniversary. Where most other recent studies have argued a case, Gilbert is content to marshal the facts and let them speak for themselves.

By any standards, it is an enthralling story. However familiar, at times it is almost unbearably moving to read again about the waves of immigration from Eastern Europe, the political battle waged by Herzl and Weizmann, the pre-state settlements often created overnight under cover of darkness, the illegal immigrant ships carrying survivors from the concentration camps, and the War of Independence into which Israel was plunged at birth.

Inevitably the story of Israel



Tribute to the grave: the Israeli sculptor Yitzhak Shmueli set up cutout figures to commemorate Israeli soldiers who died in the Lebanese conflict, from Israel: 50 Years. As seen by Magnum Photographers (Aperture, £40).

is dominated by war, and reading Gilbert's narrative one is forced to ask whether there was any moment at which peace was possible.

Like many others at the time, I felt that the Six Day War created a moment of opportunity. Within days Israel had proposed a far-reaching peace plan to Egypt and Syria. The answer, delivered at the Khartoum summit, was a three-fold negative: "No peace. No negotiation. No recognition."

One episode sums up much else in Israel's history. In June 1969, Golda Meir offered to go personally to Egypt to negotiate a peace agreement. A Jordanian newspaper at the time commented: "Mrs Meir is prepared to go to Cairo to hold discussions with President Nasser but, to her sorrow, has not been invited. She believes that one fine day a world without guns will

emerge in the Middle East. Golda Meir is behaving like a grandmother telling bedtime stories to her children."

Gilbert is too discreet an historian to let his sympathies obtrude, but it is clear where they lie. Like the great 19th-century advocate of the return to the land, A. D. Gordon, he would argue that the test of the Jewish state would lie in its relationship to the Palestinian Arabs. "Our attitude towards them," he wrote, "must be one of humanity, of moral courage which remains on the highest plane... indeed, their hostility is all the more reason for our humanity."

The triumphs of Israel are immense. It has turned a once barren land into a place of farms and forests. It has created one of the great developing economies of the modern world. It has provided the home for Jews who so desperately lacked in the centuries of dispersion and persecution.

Despite constant pressures of terrorism and war it has sustained its commitment to democracy. Through it the Hebrew language has been reborn. It is not too much to say that through it the Jewish people have been reborn after the traumas of the Holocaust.

The tragedy of Israel is that it did not achieve what Herzl thought it would: an end of hostility towards Jews. Instead it shifted the problem from Europe to the Middle East, from Christianity to Islam, and from powerlessness to power.

Martin Gilbert has left us in his debt, not only for a superb history of Israel but also for a restatement of the classic vision of Zion, in which a Middle East without guns is not a bedtime story but an imperative long overdue. That was the vision for which Yitzhak Rabin gave his life. This book is a tribute to his memory.

CHAIM SKIBELSKI (the name of Joseph Skibell's great-grandfather) was a Jewish businessman in Poland during the war. He, his family, and the Jews from his village, were rounded up, taken to a forest and shot. They were then buried in a line-filled pit. This is no different from the fate of thousands upon thousands of Polish Jews, except that in this tale, Skibell's first novel, Chaim Skibelski, dead, returns to live in the house that was once his and is now inhabited by a Polish family he knew in his previous life. Nor is he alone. Along with him goes an old black crow, the rebbe, who talks to Chaim. Between them they work out that they are dead, and invisible to others, except to some children, and especially to Ola, daughter of the Poles who have expropriated Chaim's house. She is con-

Roy Foster is haunted by a mighty Irish novel

Rescued from the ruin of tenderness

Sebastian Barry is a risk-taker: he began his precocious career as a poet, wrote (reputedly in a few hectic weeks) an intermittently virtuosic experimental novel called *The Engine of Owl-Light*, and then went on to a series of astonishing plays. Those who saw Donald McCann in *The Steward of Christendom* will not forget it: a rambling old man in a bleak Irish "county house", remembering his days as a Dublin police inspector under British rule, bereft by history from assuming a role in his own life.

The territory is partly familiar. Eneas McNulty is once again a servant of the British state (Merchant Navy, then Royal Irish Constabulary) during the era of revolution, and he suffers for it. A sentence of death for supposed collaboration hangs over his head, delivered by his savage childhood friend Jonno: he is banished from a lyrical Sligo childhood, where his mother dances in front of the fire and his father "rises with the lark" if ever there were a lark in John Street and off he goes with a dapper air to the lunatic asylum to stitch suits for the madmen. (Eneas will temporarily go mad himself, and a teddy-boy suit he buys in London, long years afterwards, will play a strange part in his history.) The hatred his countrymen have for him is a class of signpost, a class of explanation for the ruin of their tenderness. For they are not tender people now. And savage people have done that to them: because when there is murder and murder, the heart is killed like a rat with poison, up on the sill of a farmhouse, panting, trying to cool its burning self.

He is haunted by epiphanic insights from his personal experience — the shock of his siblings' arrival into his charmed childhood, the envious sight of a brother reading bedtime stories to his children — but his ordeal stands for something more. Born in 1900, Eneas's

wandering life intersects with events that mark the backbone of Irish history: the independence of new African countries, the influence of early Pynchon, there is a hint here of Vonnegut's *Slaughterhouse-Five*.

But the poetic power of Eneas's pilgrimage transcends the schematic or formulaic, and the pattern of his existence is that of exile and return. Through his jobbing, wandering life he comes back to Sligo, finding strange changes, subtle reversals, half-explained secrets: but the sentence of death invariably awaits him into the unwelcome world once more. He lives out his allotted span, three score and ten, finally running a hostel for lost and wandering men in the Isle of Dogs with his Nigerian soulmate, Harcourt. When his sentence comes at the end, it is not without redemption and revelation.

By then he has fought in France, dug ditches in Africa, been a down-and-out in "this queer England of filthy hennies and ruined soldiers", known lunacy and alcoholism. On his periodic doleful returns he observes Sligo move in to the new Ireland of beef deals and bungalows. His own sweetness and innocence remain undimmed. "He doesn't know if his own eyes show him the world, or a different world that isn't there." (On his enemies' final visit, in the 1970s, they refer to "the North"; "The North of what?" asks Eneas, and means it.)

He is lost to acceptable history, written out of the book of life. The sense of loss pervades this book, while Eneas feels things "raw as a scrape". The structure, like the language, resembles a long narrative poem: in fictional terms, it echoes the journal stories of another Stigman, Mick Yeats, or the elaborate ventriloquism of Flannery O'Connor. But it stands as a novel reflecting the Irish history, Irish losses, Irish identities, with singular force, grace and beauty. And at the end of the achievement demands a word much used by Eneas: "Mighty".



Barry: a novel return

THE
WHEREABOUTS
OF ENEAS
MCNULTY
By Sebastian Barry
Penguin £12.99
ISBN 0 330 35197 4

With a ghost of a chance

Julia Neuberger

A BLESSING ON THE MOON

By Joseph Skibell
Little Brown, £14.99
ISBN 0 316 64248 7

survive, near death, and she weeps for the death of the Jews. Nor is he alone. Along with him goes an old black crow, the rebbe, who talks to Chaim. Between them they work out that they are dead, and invisible to others, except to some children, and especially to Ola, daughter of the Poles who have expropriated Chaim's house. She is con-

Chain tends to her needs, is shocked at her parents' response to her, sleeps with her, amuses her. Then he watches after her death as she departs in a sky-borne carriage driven by Jesus and the Virgin Mary. Here, the novel is ill-conceived. The scene with the Virgin Mary and Jesus is trite. We are supposed to be amused, or moved, by this Christian afterlife for the Christian girl, as the Jew Chaim walks through the world dead, unable to find peace. It does not work.

Nor does a later episode, where all the village's Jews go to a great hotel in the middle of a river, become whole again

and are baked into bread. Shades of the gas ovens, and crude imagery, whilst the end of this section is reminiscent of D. M. Thomas's *The White Hotel*.

And yet the first and central conceit, the dead man not dead, invisible but to a few, powering his fate, not rescuing the others from the pit, is a powerful one. The novel is flawed in parts. The use of the traditional *meshech*, the stories of Yiddish folklore, is a deft touch. Skibell can write. Whether he can create enough of a true novel out of this conceit is unclear. It is not a work, yet it has two short stories, it might have done. The language is powerful, and the writing assured. Skibell's next novel may be more consistent, allowing his great talent to use the novel for complex ideas set within a distressing tale. For he has much to say.

Slave to rhyme and rhythm

Derwent May

MAKING LOVE TO MARILYN

Edited by Susan Roberts
Penguin, £9.99
ISBN 0 14 026451 1

BLEEDING HEARTS

Edited by Michelle Lovrie
Aurum, £9.99
ISBN 1 8540 5353 3

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Edited by Wendy Mulford
Virago, £6.99
ISBN 1 85196 435 8

THE BOOK OF LOVE

Edited by D. Ackermann and J. Macklin
Norton, £22.50
ISBN 0 393 04581 7



I am not a muse: Marilyn Monroe jokes with her new husband Arthur Miller, 1956

sections, each of them reflecting the stages of a love affair from first excitement to "it's all over". Very disparate poems jostle in each section, and any love affair that went through all these gear changes would leave the lovers exhausted for the rest of their lives. On the whole, however, these poems tend to be rather spiky and unromantic, in the way of young English poets today — they give one a very snapshot of love rather than a substantial experience.

The book begins with Lynn

Peters's "I suspect/ There would be more poems/ About sex/ If it rhymed with more than/ Pecks/ Necks/ Erects and Ejacts", and that sets the light-hearted tone. Gavin Ewart has some good poems in this vein, and Simon Armitage some rather more subtle ones. Peter Reading nicely observes the tyres on a wet road outside a hotel bedroom murmuring finish, finish. The more powerful poems are by Shakespeare and other greats.

One failure on top of another. Adrian Henri has another two-line: "I wanted your soft verges/ But you gave me the hard shoulder." So there is more amusement here than emotion, as the editor wants. Two sad songs

by Noël Coward strike the highest pitch. *The Virago Book of Love Poetry* is a new printing of a collection that first came out eight years ago. There are not many viragos in it, though all its contributors are women — but there are not all that many good poems in it either. I am afraid that the editor, hijacked poetry in the cause of feminism, and has ended up by letting down both.

With a good poem — or story or novel — we do not even need to know whether the

author is a roan or woman. The sex of the speaker in the poem may contribute to its character, but the experience we have when we read becomes our own. Mulford wants her book to be an "achievement for feminism", but it ends up being the opposite.

That said, there are still some very good things here. Emily Dickinson's dramatic cries ring through the book, we hear the extraordinary voice of Sylvia Plath again, and there are poems by Anna Akhmatova which even in translation are full of tightly shouldering grief and anger. *The Book of Love* is the latest volume of the four, and takes us back into a world of more traditional romantic feelings. This is not only a matter of its including plenty of Blake and Keats and Burns, and extracts from novelists such as Flaubert and Henry James and Edith Wharton.

There is also a fair representation of work by younger American poets — and many of those still seem to yearn, however hopelessly, for romantic intensity, in a way that their British counterparts are too cool to do. The resulting poetry is sometimes prosy, rhetorical or sentimental. However, this is not a weak in which to be too curmudgeonly about any love poetry. Aphrodite might look down her beautiful nose at these books — but I think that St Valentine would allow them all a place on his shelves.

THE TIMES BOOKSHOP

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سكنا من الاجل

Is there such a thing as a gay tradition? Peter Ackroyd assesses two attempts to separate sexuality from style

Pride of literary lions uncaged

Is it homosexual literature, or literature by homosexuals? Both of the books under review indirectly raise this interesting question, without necessarily resolving it. Mr Woods provides all the necessary evidence, however, and in this intriguing history, he has traced almost all the manifestations of homosexual desire. He takes in *The Divine Comedy* and the *Mabinogion*, Sextus Propertius and D. H. Lawrence, Marlowe and Gide.

A HISTORY OF GAY LITERATURE
The Male Tradition
By Gregory Woods
Yale, £24.95
ISBN 0 300 07301 5

PAGES PASSED FROM HAND TO HAND
The Hidden Tradition of Homosexual Literature in English from 1784 to 1914
Edited by Mark Mitchell and David Leavitt
Chaitin and Windus, £20
ISBN 0 7011 6641 X

instead; it has helped to create the elegiac tradition within English poetry. Homosexual characters in 19th and early 20th-century novels were consigned by divine decree to isolation and suffering. It is paradoxical that these shivering selves of earlier fiction should anticipate the real, death and misery visited upon their brethren of a different age.



Gay icon? Siegfried Sassoon with Stephen Tennant

grave's *Golden Treasury* where plots and characters are picked up without any sense of context or of style, in rifling through texts of a hundred different cultures, it often seems to be a case of *cherchez l'homme*.

But there are also passages when the approach works very well. In one highly readable chapter Woods

employs the technique to clever effect in his description of the Sodomites in Dante's *Purgatorio* who, although damned, "seem to be in competition to see which of them can most loudly proclaim where they come from". There is room for paradox, therefore, even after death yet it seems perverse, to say the least, that homosexuals should be doomed to self-contradiction just as they once were to secrecy.

Certainly there is very little paradox in the collection assembled by David Leavitt and Mark Mitchell. Its subtitle, "The Hidden Tradition of Homosexual Literature", promises a cabinet of curiosities and there are indeed some interesting items. There is for example a charming and suggestive fable by that doyen of children's writers, Kenneth Grahame. Has any director ever considered a gay version of *The Wind in the Willows*? There is also a very entertaining story by Melville about his big chimney and its mystery — "Besides," the narrator writes, "even if there were a secret closet, secret it should re-

main, and secret it shall." But not all the work selected for this volume is of a high standard. There is a great deal that is fey, meretricious and ridiculous. There are items from 19th-century gay American writers filled with long looks and clasping hands but precious little else, and there is a truly absurd passage from Charles Warren Stoddard's *South Sea Idylls* where the wind is singing in the rigging with "the entire crew — dressed in blue flannels with broad collars — skipping about in the most fantastic manner". The authors must have a predilection for bad American writing since there seems no other reason to devote more than 100 pages (in a 450-page book) to the work of one author, Alan Dale, who gave the world *The Great Wet Way*, *Familiar Chats With Queens of the Stage* and *A Girl Who Wrote*.

Put in the picture

David Hurn zooms in on a master of the frozen moment

Gather together a group of the world's finest photographers and the name Henri Cartier-Bresson is bound to emerge. The man, 90 years of age this year, seems to have affected most committed photographers.



The painter turned photographer with a unique way of seeing: Alicante, Spain, 1933

EUROPEANS
By Henri Cartier-Bresson
Thames & Hudson, £20.95
ISBN 0 500 54216 3

TÊTE À TÊTE
By Henri Cartier-Bresson
Thames & Hudson, £32
ISBN 0 500 54218 X

LINE BY LINE
By Henri Cartier-Bresson
Thames & Hudson, £28
ISBN 0 500 09700 0

father returned from the war. He bought my mother a hat. My memory of that event and the emotions evoked by the Russian picture were identical. I had been nearly overwhelmed by anti-Russian rhetoric, yet here was a Russian who had enough money to buy his wife a gift, and who displayed tenderness and caring. The image had the touch of authenticity; it felt real and true. Suddenly, here was a profession in which I could feel happy.

shoot with speed of mind and body and heart, like an unobtrusive gadfly gliding from one delight to another. He must seize the moment before it passes. Every observation significant, never cruel. The subject matter ordinary, never exotic if you examine a Cartier-Bresson photograph thoughtfully enough you will find a part of yourself therein.

while continuing his portrait photography. "Photography is a way of drawing and keeping a perpetual diary of my life," he writes.

among others, surreal haunting images from a natural history museum. The portraits are unobtrusive — as though the intruder did not wish to disturb. You sense the photographer simply wished the subject to get on with life until he could suddenly clutch at a pertinent moment. It is hard to believe that anyone can develop the ability to visualise instantaneously the combination of a moment and a finished composition complete to the very edge of the frame yet with respect for reality.

Donald Cameron Watt
WAR BEHIND ENEMY LINES
The Imperial War Museum Book
By Julian Thompson
Sidgwick and Jackson, £25
ISBN 0 283 06253 3

was destroyed by German armour-air-shock assault and Britain driven from Europe, such alternatives seemed the more attractive, particularly to Winston Churchill.

evaluation is that of an efficient if open-minded staff officer. Thompson cites the jaundiced words of a conventionally-minded general to the effect that the Special Forces contributed "nothing to victory"; rather they offered "a too easy, because romanticised, form of gallantry".

conceived failure. There are two points he does not consider. The first is that the historical record of the British Army is all in favour of small unit war. One can count on the fingers of one hand the British generals who have shone in the command of large armies: Cromwell, Wellington, Montgomery; the rest run from the merely competent to the disastrous. Small scale

commands of divisional level or below is quite another matter. Perhaps the Special Units reflect a particular island ability. The second is the human need for heroism: whatever else British special forces did, their exploits kept British morale high between Dunkirk and D-Day. Julian Thompson's cool reassessment will maintain that elevation.

The boys' own stories told

British interest in the history of the Second World War shows no sign of abating. As usual the cynics who ascribe this to an unhealthy British interest in imperialist nostalgia, are only half right. Humankind needs stories of heroism and adventure. And the course of the Second World War so replete of tragedy and obscure cruelty, insane lust after mass

destruction also offers heroism and adventure in abundance.

The title of Julian Thompson's latest book suggests the format of a *Boys' Own Paper* era children's history. Brigadier Thompson has chosen to interweave his own hard and professional prose style with copious quotations from the immense collection of letters and personal testimonies collected by the Imperial War Museum. But it is also a study of the uses of the kind of irregular warfare and the specialised small units developed under British command during the years 1939-45 in North Africa, Europe and South East Asia; the commandos, the Long Range Desert Group, the Special Boat Section, Popski's Private Army, and the large scale experiment in Burma set up by Orde Wingate and the Chindits.

The stories are told through the eyes and voices of the ordinary rank and file. The

THE TIMES

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PEPSI

CHANGING TIMES

Grownup fables turn the tables

MOST of us have heard of Aesop. He's as famous as Homer, if not more so. We know he composed fables, and we may have come across them at school. It's odd that his stories are pressed upon children, for they concern an adult world characterised by surprising bleakness and cruelty. Good preparation for the savagery of the playground.

Dimly remembering these tales of wily foxes and stubborn donkeys, it is quite a shock for the reader to encounter Robert Temple's introduction to this new translation — *The Complete Fables* (Penguin Classics, £5.99, ISBN 0 14 046449 4) — and learn that the Aesop we met in the classroom was not the real one at all.

low status, he lived the life of a personal clerk or secretary, operating as an agent on behalf of his owners and carrying out business for them. His animal tales were produced to help him devastate his opponents. He thus became a legendary name around which similar, sharply witty, animal tales clustered in later centuries; most of the surviving ones probably not written by him. Power struggles, death, criminality and human stupidity seem to be

the favourite themes. Women hardly feature at all, because their status was close to that of slaves. Why did Aesop employ animal masks for his satires? Perhaps for political reasons. Temple does not inform us.



La Fontaine: fruity stories

poems. We discover the other side of La Fontaine, the admirer of Rabelais, elbowing us in the ribs to make us snigger at these saucy vignettes of old men failing to cope with hungry young wives, nuns entertaining paramours, and so on. Guido Waldman's translation is as enterprising and as clever as any of the protagonists. The poems work like shaggy dog stories, driving inexorably if long-windedly towards punning punchlines via outrageous rhymes. So contemporary is the language and verse shapes of Waldman's translation that La Fontaine as author disappears. Like Aesop's fables, these are stories for grownups.

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Waldman, illustrated by Richard Shirley Smith (Harvill Press, £6.99, ISBN 1 80496 438 6). It's certainly refreshing to read these bawdy, romping

MICHÈLE ROBERTS

هكذا من الاجل

SAILING

Dalton paints vivid picture of life on the ocean wave

By Edward Gorman, SAILING CORRESPONDENT

IT IS difficult to get good pictures of Whitbread Round the World Race yachts racing through gales and the high seas of the Southern Ocean. But this race has produced some exceptional written accounts, both by skippers and crews, relating what racing the limits is all about, and Grant Dalton, the skipper of *Merit Cup*, has consistently been among the best.

At about the time that Great Britain's Lawrie Smith saw his mast come crashing down on *Silk Cut*, Dalton sent an e-mail from *Merit Cup* that brought the reality of sailing in the Southern Ocean to life. Dalton and his exhausted New Zealand crew found themselves racing neck-and-neck with Paul Standbridge, of Great Britain, and his American-Australian crew on *Toshiba*. They were in the middle of nowhere and going at a pace that even Dalton regarded as reckless.

"As I look out the hatch," he wrote, "not more than 200 metres away there is *Toshiba* absolutely flying. It is one of the most dramatic sailing scenes you could imagine. These two yachts at a point on the globe which is as far away from land as anywhere else on

Earth, going as hard as they can. We are averaging around 20 knots in up to 40 knots of breeze.

"As *Toshiba* starts to surf, often their hull will come clear right back to the keel. At the same time a huge plume of water rises above the topsides and the boat is hurled into the trough — I have never seen a boat look like that before."

Dalton went on to describe how his own crew lost miles to their rivals by opting for the sensible option of flying a storm spinnaker. But the next position updates showed that they were slipping back through the fleet, so they changed up to a bigger one.



Cayard: maintaining lead

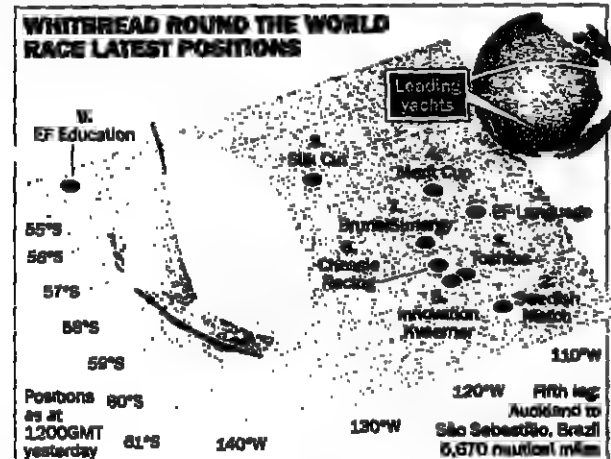
"This is not safe at all, the way we are sailing now," Dalton, who won the maxi class in the last Whitbread, continued. "But what choice do you have? Come last or hammer it with the chance of crashing like *Silk Cut*? I guess, as a competitor, the latter is the only option."

Two hours later, Dalton ordered his crew to ease up, as Standbridge shredded his big spinnaker just ahead of him. "I heard one of the guys mention last night that, if you made your dog live in conditions like we are at present, you would be had up by the RSPCA — he's probably right," Dalton added. "But the boys are self-motivated and push on regardless. For me, it's a matter of balancing the need to push hard, but not over the top — I think my sheer fear of what could happen to us stops that."

Yesterday, Dalton was lying in fourth place as the fifth leg continued to serve up a dangerous downwind endurance test for the seven remaining crews still racing. Having admitted that he and his Whitbread novices aboard *EF Language* could not take the pace through the Southern Ocean on the second leg, Paul Cayard, on *EF Language*, has stepped up this time to meet the challenge. So far he has been able to maintain a punishing pace and *EF Language* has held on to her lead without suffering serious damage.

Yesterday, with about 1,500 miles still to sail to Cape Horn, Cayard's average speed was down to 15.5 knots but he still had a cushion of 25 miles over Gunnar Krantz, on Swedish *Match*, who was sailing two knots faster. Standbridge was 38 miles adrift in third.

Among the best performers is *Chesapeake*, skippered by Dee Smith, presently in sixth place. The crew have spent 48 hours repairing their water-ballast pump and, yesterday, the boat was averaging 18.9 knots, the highest speed in the fleet. She was still 115 miles off the lead, however.



DISTANCE TO FINISH (as at 1200GMT yesterday, with miles to Cape Horn): 1. *EF Language* (Sve) 3,595.1 miles; 2. *Swedish Match* (Sve) 3,619.3; 3. *Toshiba* (US) 3,667.7; 4. *Merit Cup* (Monaco) 3,685.5; 5. *Innovation Kvaerner* (Nor) 3,709.0; 6. *Chesapeake* (US) 3,710.5; 7. *BruneiStar* (Nor) 3,761; 8. *Silk Cut* (GB) 3,835.9; 9. *EF Education* (Sve) 4,518.1.



Gebrselassie crosses the line to win the 10,000 metres at last year's world championships in Athens

Twelfth world record coming up

IT IS a question which probably only true aficionados of athletics can answer. Who is the only non-African to hold a men's world record, indoors or out, at events from 1,500 metres up to the marathon?

Eamonn Coghlan, of Ireland, is the answer but the question surely has only three days left in it. The African sweep should be completed on Sunday in the 2,000 metres at the Bupa Indoor Grand Prix in Birmingham where Haile Gebrselassie, from Ethiopia, will be seeking his twelfth world record. "The world record is not an easy job," Gebrselassie said yesterday. Who better for the job, though?

Gebrselassie and the Kenyans are like second-hand car dealers moving vehicles from one forecourt to another, knowing last turnover is good for business. It applies as much to world records as it does to cars. Even before he lost the 5,000 and 10,000 metres world records in one evening to two Kenyans in Brussels last August, Gebrselassie had set, lost and regained world records in the two miles, 5,000 and 10,000 metres.

The indoor season has barely begun and they are at it again. Gebrselassie set an indoor 3,000 metres world record two weeks ago but his fiercest Kenyan rival

David Powell talks to a great athlete who is tuned in to a special wavelength

Daniel Komen, relieved him of it last week. However, the Kenyans can rest easy on Sunday. Their records are safe for now as it is Coghlan's mark which will be under attack. Coghlan has had it in his possession for 11 years, yet he lives in an age when, if a record lasts a season, it is a small miracle. The perception of world record opportunity now among the Africans was best summed up yesterday by Gebrselassie's response to being asked how he had felt in losing two world records in one night.

"I said to my friend: 'This is not my day' came his reply. The engaging smile which was his trademark wherever he went, Gebrselassie was very definite about his priorities, long and short term. First a record on Sunday. Then world records in the 3,000, 5,000 and 10,000 metres Olympic champion.

10,000 metres, the marathon gold medal at the 2004 Olympics, but most important of all, a 5,000/10,000 metres double at the Sydney Olympics.

How recently this man craves to complete his hero, his fellow Ethiopian, Yifter, who won the 5,000 and 10,000 metres at the 1990 Moscow Olympics.

He wants, more than anything, the golden double which he was so close to follow on radio as a small boy living in a mud hut in sub-Saharan Africa. That he risked his father's wrath.

"I am sure he would have killed me if he had discovered what I had done," Gebrselassie reflected yesterday.

What was this heinous crime which would so have enraged his father? "He did not care about sport," Gebrselassie said. "He bought the radio and the battery only for news, nothing else. I stole the battery and radio to listen to the commentary." Undetected, he returned it.

The battery that powers Gebrselassie's watch just as well, one imagines, as it does his communication device. However, he will not take the chance of running out before Sydney, though that could be his first challenge as 5,000 and 10,000 metres Olympic champion.

SPORT IN BRIEF

Noon starts proposed by counties

CRICKET: Northamptonshire and Leicestershire yesterday announced that they are to experiment with noon starts in three of their home British Assurance county championship matches in June and July next season.

AN UNNAMED South Africa player has apologised for spearing a stump through the door of the Australia changing-room in Adelaide during the third Test match earlier this month.

Coventry theft

CRICKET: Coventry have called in the police after a confidential document was stolen from their offices. The document, detailing players' wages and expenses, was taken from Derek Eves, the director of coaching, and faced to members. **BRENDAN VENTER**, the former South Africa international centre, has joined London Irish on an 18-month contract.

Same again

WRESTLING: Mike Gilbert, the Scottish coach, has named an unchanged squad from the one that finished third in the qualifying tournament in Zimbabwe last year for the World Cup finals in May. **SCOTLAND:** S. Laurie (Glasgow), T. Rabbie, A. Davidson, H. Walker (all Glasgow), J. Thomson, J. Laidlaw, G. Brown, A. Grant, I. Barton, R. Simpson, D. Buchanan, V. Neil (all Edinburgh), J. Laidlaw, S. Robertson (Glasgow), S. MacDonald (Glasgow), S. Gilmore (H&C).

Peter Longbottom


GYMNASIUM: Peter Longbottom, who won 44 Commonwealth Games and national championship medals, has died after a road accident near York. He was 38.

Right on cue

OLYMPIC GAMES: Snooker, billiards and pool have been recognised as sports for future inclusion in the Olympics.

THE TIMES

A cure for bronchitis.



In the world of complementary medicine, chillies are the hot new treatment for bronchitis. Find out more in *Healing*, six free guides to complementary medicine. Part two only in *The Times*, this Saturday.

<http://www.the-times.co.uk>

CHANGING TIMES

SHEEHAN on BRIDGE

By ROBERT SHEEHAN, BRIDGE CORRESPONDENT

This hand is from the match between Britain and Germany in the 1997 Generali European Championship. The 12th of 15 was a North-South and Andreas Holowski was the German.

Dealer South

♠ 10 8 6 4 2
♥ K Q J 6 5 4
♦ A K Q J 6 5 4
♣ A 7 2

♠ A 7 2
♥ V 3 2
♦ 10 9
♣ K Q J 10 7

Contract: Five Clubs by South. Lead: Four of Hearts.

You wouldn't mind being in six of a minor, but Holowski found a great play to beat Five Clubs. He won the first trick and switched to a spade. If Hackett (I don't know which twin was playing the hand, or has the Toni come to that) had ducked the spade, he would have had the entries to take two major-suit ruffs. But, if clubs were no worse 3-1, he had good chances of making an overtrick in Five Clubs, so not unreasonably he won the spade and tried a top trump from hand. His idea was to draw trumps and ruff out the diamonds.

When East showed out on the first trump, Hackett ruffed a heart and played a spade from dummy. East could have beaten the contract mundanely by playing low, allowing his partner to win and play a club or a diamond. But he took the

king of spades. Now there was only one card in his hand to beat the contract. A major suit would allow declarer to get his vital second ruff in dummy, and a few diamonds would give away that suit. But he found the winning play — the lack of diamonds. That scrambled the entries. The best declarer could do was to draw trumps, but when the diamonds didn't run he was one down.

□ In yesterday's column, the mention of "West" in the first two paragraphs below the diagram should have read "East". Anyone interested in the correct version, with extra witticisms and further analysis by Tom Townsend, the junior world champion, should write to me at *The Times*.

□ Robert Sheehan writes on bridge Monday to Friday in *Sport* and in the *Weekend* section on Saturday.

KEENE on CHESS

By RAYMOND KEENE, CHESS CORRESPONDENT

English success

Michael Adams, the British grandmaster, co-British champion and Mind Sports Olympiad gold medal-winner, consolidated his outstanding reputation with a further fine result in the tournament at Wijk aan Zee. Today, I give two wins by Adams from that competition.

White: Friso Nijboer
Black: Michael Adams
Wijk aan Zee
January 1998

Ruy Lopez

1 e4 e5
2 Nf3 Nc6
3 Bc4 Bc5
4 Bb5 Nf6
5 O-O Be7
6 Re1 d5
7 Bc3 Bb7
8 d4 Bc6
9 d5 Bxd5
10 c3 Nf6
11 Na3 Qc7
12 Bb2 Nc6
13 c4 bxc4
14 Nc3 Nc6
15 Ne5 Bc5
16 Bc4 Bc5
17 Nc3 Bc6
18 Rb2 Nf7
19 Na1 Kf8
20 Nc2 f5
21 b4 Nc4
22 Qxd4 Nc4
23 Nbd4 cxd4
24 b5 bxc5
25 axb5 Nc6
26 Rf1 Qe8
27 Nf3 Bc7
28 Nb5 Bxb5
29 Bb2 Nf6
30 Bc4 Nf8
31 Bc3 Nf4
32 Ne5 Qd7
33 Bb8 Rf8
34 Rc2 Bb2+
35 Rf4 Rf4
36 Nc6 Qd3
37 Rf7 Qc5
38 Qc1 Nf5+
White resigns.

Sicilian Defence

1 e4 c5
2 Nf3 d6
3 d4 cxd4
4 Qxd4 Nf6
5 Qc2 g6
6 Bg2 Bg7
7 Bc3 Nc6
8 Nc3 Nf6
9 Bb2 Nc6
10 Bb1 Nf6
11 Bc2 Nf6
12 Bc3 Nf6
13 Bc2 Nf6
14 Bc3 Nf6
15 Bc2 Nf6
16 Bc3 Nf6
17 Bc2 Nf6
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27 Bc2 Nf6
28 Bc3 Nf6
29 Bc2 Nf6
30 Bc3 Nf6
31 Bc2 Nf6
32 Bc3 Nf6
33 Bc2 Nf6
34 Bc3 Nf6
35 Bc2 Nf6
36 Bc3 Nf6
37 Bc2 Nf6
38 Bc3 Nf6
Black resigns.

□ Raymond Keene writes on chess Monday to Friday in *Sport* and in the *Weekend* section on Saturday.

By Philip Howard

HISPA
a. An elephant spear
b. A beetle
c. A stepfather

MADRIENE
a. A pass at bullfighting
b. An embroidered skirt
c. Clear soup

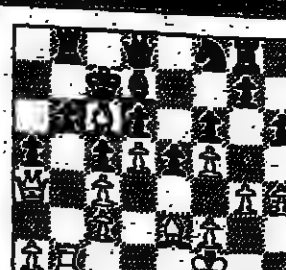
HALOSAURUS
a. A fish
b. A marine dinosaur
c. Bad breath

NAMMA
a. A type of leavened bread
b. A waterhole
c. A Nilotic coracle

Answers on page 46

By Raymond Keene

White to play. This position is from the game Dyrhøus Hansen, Reykjavik 1997. How did White now transform his huge space advantage into something more concrete?



Gold mountain turns into heartbreak hill

I was the clearest, crispest, coldest day in the mountains so far. The Japanese, celebrating National Foundation Day, crowded the routes towards the Roof of Japan, as Nagano's peaks are known, fully expecting to cheer Masahiko Harada, master of the 90-metre hill, to victory in the ski jump and so provide his country with its second gold medal.

In the end, it would come down to just two men. Harada, who had destroyed the opposition during a flawless winter season in Europe, having overshadowed every one of yesterday's 61 rivals, including Jani Soininen, the Finn who finally stood alone with him looking down at the sea of Rising Suns waving in a crowd of some 45,000.

Both knew what the majority expected. All it would take

all — was a repetition of Harada's first, mighty jump of the morning of 91.5 metres, and the gold medal was his. But history was on Harada's back. He had flopped from this position before, costing Japan the team gold medal at the Lillehammer Games in 1994. To fail once might be considered unfortunate, to fail a second time would be unpardonable.

Soininen, a solitary man — he lives alone with his dog while Harada enjoys the responsibility of raising two children — was the first to prepare to step off the mountain into thin air. He did not set on infinity. He summoned what the Finns call "sisu", a word that has no direct translation. An inner calm of almost tranquil courage comes closest to describing it.

At the moment of truth, Soininen, having burst out of the darkness of Finland's long winter, seemed oblivious to every living thing. His cheeks were sucked in, the lips no doubt dry. Ready, steady... but no go. A rogue gust of wind, above the permitted two metres per second, turned on the red light for the only time during the two hours of competition.

Soininen stepped back from the brink, his concentration broken. Harada, behind him, appeared even more distracted, removing his helmet, running gloved fingers through his black hair. The delay was brief, however, and Soininen, a precision mechanic by trade, was back into his crouch, away, then soaring through the air, a stable, controlled human projectile.

His mark of 89 metres, added to the 90 metres first jump, overtook the rest of the field, but brought a smile to Harada's face. For the second time, premature contentment



sometimes, as the English know (even in the non-victory of Euro 96), chauvinism gets the better of good intentions. We have no right to expect Japan to be any different, and anyway, it is healthy to cheer our sporting heroes.

Harada is not that, yet. He wore a stoical mask during two years of rebuilding his technique and his pride after Lillehammer, and lately his smile has earned him the sobriquet "Mr Happy".

But now, down in his crouch, he had a serious effort to make. His launch speed was a measured 79.4 kilometres per hour, exactly the same as his first jump. But, whereas then he had been so serene, so controlled, so confident, the pressure of expectation tightened him up the second time around.

Maybe he lifted off prematurely. Maybe he dropped too soon. But, after two seconds of flight, he fell short, for him unforgivably short, at 84.5 metres. He dropped not just

out of the gold medal position but out of the medals altogether.

Silence. Absolute silence. His life had passed before him behind his visor, and the image of gold turned to white dust. Japan, the nation, had been complacent, having drunk in the nectar of Hirofumi Shimizu winning a less expected gold in the 500 metres speed skating the previous day. They had banked on a second gold from Harada. In truth, we all had.

Harada's famed smile was now faded, his embarrassment as clear as day. The consolation of silver for Kazuyoshi Funaki was not what all those people invaded the mountain to applaud. Harada did not repeat his quip of 1994, the one about a well-brought-up Japanese being expected to commit

hara-kiri, nor is it remotely funny to talk about falling on his ski tip.

Ski jumping is a sport of opportunity, and by Sunday, Harada might atone by winning on the 120-metre hill. By Tuesday, he could make it a double, leading the team challenge. "I'm sorry," Harada simply and soulfully said, "I feel I let people down. Now I have to go for the 120. I can do it. I know I can."

I hope he does. Masahiko Harada is a dignified man, a family man who has sport in perspective. He wears fame so well, he shares the happiness and compulsion of being there, and maybe all that he needs is a Japanese translation of Kipling's homily — the one about treating triumph and disaster just the same.

ROB HUGHES

To fail for the second time would be unpardonable

For two years he rebuilt his technique and his pride

Jumpers reach for the sky and hit new high

The dream of flight is an inescapable part of the human condition. "Never mind, George," Peter Fonda said in the film *Easy Rider*. "We'll try again in the morning. It's a whole new way of looking at the day."

And morning comes in the space of a single frame and with it a new and soaring song: "If you want to be a bird, it won't take much to get you up there..."

Appropriate words for a day in which the ski jumping competition took off and a snowboarder tested positive for marijuana.

Ross Rebagliati said that he was but the hapless victim of passive marijuana smoking. I know just how he feels. I was positively forced to drink a glass of malt whisky last night and I, too, am more to be pitied than blamed. Why were all those jurors sniggering when they heard of poor Ross's inadvertent inhalation?

Which reminds me of Mark Tuit, the former Great Britain bobsleighter. He tested positive for steroids and has been banned for life. He did not say that someone spiked his drink. He did not say that the wrong urine sample had been tested. He said, shockingly, that he had been taking steroids.

He remains the only person in the history of sport to test positive and say "It was a fair cop, guv, you've got me bang to rights". In a sporting climate in which athletes seek to wessel out of the most glaring

Rebagliati to appeal against his expulsion

By JOHN GOODBODY

THE Olympic gold medal and sporting reputation of Ross Rebagliati lay in the balance yesterday as the Canadian snowboarder appealed against his expulsion from the Winter Olympics for failing a drugs test for marijuana.

The independent Court of Arbitration in Sport (CAS) began meeting yesterday in Nagano, Japan, to hear the plea of Rebagliati that he was the victim of passive smoking of the recreational drug.

Rebagliati is the first competitor to be stripped of an Olympic title since 1988, when Ben Johnson, his fellow Canadian, lost his 100 metres gold medal. This latest incident will reopen the debate over whether the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the sports federations should legislate against competitors who

Carol Ann Lethen, the chief executive of the Canadian Olympic Association (COA), expressed "complete and absolute discontent".

Michael Wood, the executive director of the Canadian Snowboarding Federation (CSF), said that Rebagliati has admitted "to the CSF, CAO and the IOC that he had been involved in the use of marijuana since April 1997".

However, he had added that "everyone Rebagliati knows and associates with is a user, including everyone with whom he shares a house in Whistler, British Columbia". The snowboarder had last been in contact with them at a party in Canada on January 31, the day before leaving for the Games. The drug can remain in the urine for up to four weeks.

Professor David Cowan, director of Britain's only IOC-accredited laboratory at King's College, London University, said that research had been done in this country and the United States into the effects of passive smoking on the levels of cannabis found in an individual's urine. He said that, to reach 15 nanograms, researchers had been forced to wear goggles to protect their eyes from the effects of the smoke.

The first tests for marijuana at an Olympics were held in 1988. Under IOC regulations, tests for cannabis may be conducted and a positive case may lead to sanctions. But only certain sports prohibit its use.

Marijuana can be a performance-enhancing drug because it can reduce inhibitions in some sports such as motor sports and horse racing, when excessive amounts can be dangerous for competitors. In Britain, football and rugby league have also prohibited the drug because they want to stop youngsters from taking part in an illegal activity.

Michele Verroken, head of the UK Sports Council's doping control unit, pointed out that, before the Atlanta Olympics, the IOC had issued a blanket ban on marijuana because of fears that competitors might use it in the village.

During 1994-95, ten competitors in British sport were found to have smoked cannabis. In 1995-96, another ten were discovered, but this dropped to two in 1996-97. The principal offenders have been footballers.



Rebagliati's image with his fellow snowboarders, who prefer freedom to competition and are suspicious of authority, will not have suffered

Surfers accused of taking sport downhill

Forget the "faster, stronger" bit of that creaking Olympic motto. What the latest and coolest sport in the Games is all about is simply getting "higher".

Welcome to the wild, weird, laid-back, New Age world of snowboarding. This is the Olympic winter sport like no other, and as if to underline that yesterday the first snowboarding gold medal-winner, Ross Rebagliati, was stripped of his title after testing positive for marijuana.

That will not dent his image too much in the eyes of the world's five million or so snowboarders. They will watch this sideshow with a relaxed grin, for most are not sure that they want their sport in the Olympics at all. They see the Games as contrived competition and fear that the authorities are trying to hijack their sport to cash in on its commercial potential.

The Olympics, with its fierce competition, its hype, its commercialism and its organisation, is the very antithesis of snowboarding — the free-wheeling, rock'n'roll alternative to skiing. "Passion is at the very heart of snowboarding," according to Cara-Beth Burnside, a freestyle boarder in the United States team. "Finding yourself is at its very soul."

Martin Robinson, the general secretary of the British Snowboarding Association, said: "It's too young a sport to

be dragged into the Olympics and to be monopolised by people who want to make fat profits. Snowboarding is about lifestyle and attitude — the emphasis is not really about competition and winning medals."

The sport has come a long way since the day in 1965 when Sherman Poppen, an inventor, saw his daughter attempting to stand on her sledge while sliding down a hill. Poppen decided to take two old children's skis and subvert them — he cut the tips off and joined them together. He named the board the "Snurfer", and in 1966 it became the first mass-produced snowboard.

This early snow surfer was little more than a large skateboard and was sold as a toy, but others saw its potential and in the early 1970s two men, Jake Burton Carpenter and Dimitrije Milovich, founded separate production companies, both of them working on improving the "Snurfer". Another board emerged when Tom Sims simply took a skateboard, modified it to slide on snow and came up with the "Flying Yellow Banana".

Surfers and skateboarders were the big influences on early snowboarding and the authorities on the ski slopes were soon looking at the new sport with fear and suspicion. Not only were the crude



boards notoriously difficult to control and thus considered dangerous, but many in the skiing establishment regarded surfers as social misfits and subversives — hedonistic representatives of the Seventies counterculture. The reaction of the skiers was to get the new cult followers banned from their territory.

The boarders combined a deep contempt for conventional skiers with fashions and attitudes designed to shock. Grunge music, baggy, second-hand clothing and a disdain for the high consumption and competitiveness of yuppie culture seemed unlikely to endear them to the International Olympic Committee (IOC), but throughout the 1990s, snowboarding has experienced phenomenal growth and the potential market is mouthwatering for the manufacturers of skiing equipment.

The dramatic potential of snowboarding prompted the skiing authorities to want a slice of its action. The FIS, the governing body, formed a snowboarding committee, largely, it seems, to take advantage of the new sport's popularity and to get it rapidly onto the programme of the Olympic Games. The Olympics liked the look of its potential television ratings and the fan excitement that it creates, particularly among the young. This has left the International Snowboard Federation, the longtime guardian of the sport, fighting for what many consider to be the soul of snowboarding.

Robinson said: "The FIS want something to give skiing a spark of life, but the only thing that snowboarding has in common with skiing is that they both use the snow."

So deep is the suspicion of the Olympics that many of the top snowboarders have refused to go to Nagano. The world champion freestyler, Terje Haakonsen, announced that he would boycott the

Games, claiming that the IOC is the equivalent of the Mafia. "When I say Mafia, I mean what most people see in the world," the Norwegian said, "people who take over control but never let anyone have a say inside look at what they are doing."

Even those who have turned up in Japan are showing concern about the future direction of their sport. Away from the television cameras, members of the US team are said to be wearing black T-shirts that show five silver handcuffs in the shape of the Olympic rings.

There has been much muttering, too, about the size of the snowboarding giant slalom event. It is at the Shiga Kogen ski resort. Normally, snowboarders are banned from its slopes, and it is only because of the Games that they are being allowed near it. In a couple of weeks they will be welcome no more.

That will not bother the snowboarders any more than the clouds of marijuana smoke floating around Rebagliati. For, in these days of burning Olympic competition, snowboarding may well be the one sport that is so relaxed that it is concerned not with the winning but with the high that comes simply from taking part.

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often, it was refreshing, to say the least.

But back to the idea of getting high. Marijuana is full of energy, but so is sport. Sport from our-and-out control, every sport has something of a high about it. Everyone who has muddled a cricket ball, headed a football or hit a tennis ball straight out of the sweet spot knows that.

But it is when you abandon bat and ball that you really start to fly. Just about every sport at the Winter Olympics is about flying. Snow and ice, its freeing you from friction, free you from the ties of the earth. Yesterday we had a super giant slalom and plenty of speed skating. A day of women with winged feet.

Freestyle skiers, mogul skiers, with even steeper jumps, and the inadvertently stoned snowboarders, too: all these escape from the tug of the earth, the figure skating, with the looming battle of the quad jumps in the men's competition, there are more and more dreams and all of them to do with the conquest of gravity.

None, however, can fly like a ski jumper. In ski jumping, victory goes to the person who can most perfectly transform himself into a wing. Style points awarded and the distance travelled reflect the degree of success in converting yourself into the best possible aerodynamic section. The lean forward, the V of the skis, the played, motionless, arms: these are not for mere aesthetics, any more than is the beautiful crescent of a swallow's wing.

Ski jumping is the most gorgeously watchable event, perhaps the most beautiful of all the flying contests in sport. The frenetic twisting and somersaulting of highboard divers and gymnasts is brilliant, rather than beautiful, all blur and confusion until the slow-motion replay cuts in.

Ski jumpers, however, are in slow motion already. They bring to our living rooms a manner that television normally does everything it can to avoid: a calm and hypnotic delight. Television, desperate to keep our attention, usually changes angle, subject, location, face, sport and music, believing that unless we are belaboured with sensation, we will switch off. But the reverse is true. The calm, measured, beautiful of ski jumping keeps us watching, lost in the dream of flight.

I have, for years, championed the efforts of the British Ski Federation to establish a ski jump in this country and I hope that this dream will be realised. In the meantime, I sipped my whisky and watched the ski jumpers. Getting high.

Making positive progress towards drug elimination

SARAH POTTER



FEW women are better qualified than Michele Verroken to comment on the controversial decision of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) yesterday to strip Ross Rebagliati, of Canada, of his snowboarding gold medal after he had tested positive for marijuana.

Verroken, director of ethics and anti-doping at the UK Sports Council, believes that athletes should still fear tests, even if the drug concerned is not performance-enhancing.

"It's about image," Verroken said. "The IOC decided to introduce a blanket ban on marijuana because they were concerned it was being used at the Olympic village. It is an illegal substance in most countries and they don't want it at the Games."

Fifa, football's world governing body, has introduced a similar ban for the World Cup. "We have already written to the Football Association because you're talking about a substance that stays in the body for a long time," Verroken said. "If a footballer was taking marijuana now, it could show up during the World Cup."

Verroken, 43, spent a decade teaching physical education, during which time she was an international netball umpire, before joining the then Great Britain Sports Council. "Colin Moynihan [the former Minister for Sport] came into office and he made

drugs in sport one of his political bandwagons," Verroken said. "I suddenly had to examine the whole drug-control infrastructure, which had simply not been good enough."

Verroken is proud of the fact that the UK testing programme is considered one of the best in the world. "We have a team of seven, whereas some countries have a staff of 20 or 30," she said. "We like to think we're doing more with less, putting the responsibility where it needs to be — with governing bodies."

She accepts that some countries have less rigorous standards. "It's difficult when a sport or country is surrounded by innuendo," she said. "There was huge pressure on our swimmers in the world championships in Perth because they were trying to compete against people who've come from nowhere. You just don't see that in normal sport. We need an open debate to convince all athletes that it's in their best interests to be drug-free."

The UK Sports Council carried out nearly 4,500 tests

last year, covering 47 sports, at a cost approaching £1 million. Although 98 per cent of the tests were negative, Verroken is not complacent. "I'm not going to be naive about it because there are substances that we have difficulty with, but we do need evidence to back it up," she said. "The vast majority do not abuse drugs and our testing programme picks up an awful lot."

The push towards professionalism, where athletes are fed lottery grants and the public expects a cash of medals, might lead some performers astray. "We have to think about those pressures and make sure everything they sign up to says 'drug-free'. It's all about setting the

commitment level." According to Verroken, "ethics" has become more important since the UK Sports Council was established by Royal Charter in January 1997. "I think people are focusing now on the wider issues," she said. "We are asking more questions about the behaviour of our sporting role models and their values."

Having two young children, Verroken will be fighting the future. "My seven-year-old boy, Nicholas, is a keen sports fan. He's already said he wants to play for Aston Villa and England. I would love to think that they will both be able to enjoy sport without thinking they have to take drugs."

Michele Verroken is a leading figure in the fight to keep sport on a level playing field

vanisevi trips up at the first hurdle

RESULTS AND CH

Mean, moody, magnificent and world No 1 once more

Ambrose is back in business

Alan Lee finds the rejuvenated fast bowler has plenty to smile about

In the first dizzying moments of West Indian celebration last Monday, Brian Lara took the microphone and told the jubilant crowd: "A lot of people had written off Curtly Ambrose, but he is going to be around for the rest of this series." Behind him, Ambrose grinned and giggled like a schoolboy at speech day - rare, unguarded joy from the most enduring match-winner of his generation.

How swiftly things have changed for him. Three weeks ago, the rumours of his impending retirement grew so strong that Ambrose was forced to go public, which he did, and denounce them. His denials were so impassioned, and the reaction so relieved, that the West Indies selectors, though privately uncertain of him, could hardly do other than return his loyalty.



'He is short on conversation. Seldom has a man been better named'

It was an organised scare to arouse support for the old warrior, it worked a treat. Ambrose, who had come home from a barren tour of Pakistan unfit and ill-considered, is now back leading the West Indies attack with all his old pomp and prominence. If he feels uninspired or demotivated, or if the pitch is too flat to interest him, it all seems to happen in slow motion.

Even on his mundane days, though, Ambrose is mean. He may have the build and the reputation of an aggressive fast bowler, but he has the mind of an accountant, saving a run here and there, offering nothing for free. He is Derek Shackleton with speed, bounce and a nasty stare. No sledging, though. Curtly is as short on conversation as on half-volleys. Seldom was a man better named.



No other West Indies bowler commands the England batsmen's respect like Ambrose

His prickliness has caused problems within the West Indies side in the past, notably on their previous tour of England when he was one of several subjected to disciplinary measures. Yet he remains

the sensitive barometer of their team spirit. When he rushed across to exhort and advise the young Nixon McLean after a wayward over, and when, as crossing batsmen, he stooped to hug David Williams for his heroic innings, there was a sense that all was well in a frequently turbulent dressing-room.

The Ambrose personality remains a closely guarded secret, even after ten years of the type of exposure that usually makes a sportsman's life open house. This is how he likes it and how he means it to stay.

Atherton upsets local press

MICHAEL ATHERTON was labelled a "cry baby" here in Trinidad yesterday for his bones, but ill-tempered criticism of the pitch on which England lost the second Test (Alan Lee writes). There may be more cause for concern tomorrow, however, when the third Test, also at Queen's Park Oval, could start on a damp surface.

The groundstaff flooded the intended strip on Monday, immediately after the end of the previous game. Since then, however, the weather in Port of Spain has broken and a second day of drizzle yesterday meant that the pitch remained under cover, and distinctly wet.

Atherton, who slept for 12 hours after the draining emotions of Monday, was only stating the obvious when he answered a direct question at the post-game presentations by

saying "It was not a very good wicket for a Test match." Local sensibilities are strong, however, and the island's broadcast newspaper, the *Trinidad Guardian*, took him to task yesterday. "If every time England find themselves under pressure Atherton is going to get on like a cry baby, the visitors may as well pack their bags," it said.

Atherton is inclined to remain faithful to the beaten XI, a view not entirely shared by the coach, David Lloyd. Both, however, agree that Jack Russell must play, despite a missed catch and stumping and two batting failures. "I'm disappointed with myself," Russell said yesterday. "It was a very average performance, just not good enough. You are never stood in the right place here, because of the bounce, but I've just got to fight against it."

He is happy to slip back into the slow and easy ways of his native Antiguan, where his mother, in the ramshackle village of Swetes, will have greeted his return to form with her customary ringing of a bell at each Ambrose wicket. Another Port of Spain Test is likely to keep her busy.

SQUASH

England trio fail LionHerts

By Colin McQuillan

ICL LionHerts' loyalty to their England world team champions players appears to have inhibited their defence of the National Super League title.

Fielding all three of their 1997 England players, the Welwyn Garden City team were beaten comprehensively at home by Ellis Lingsfield this

week and lie bottom at the league's halfway stage.

The inclusion of Simon Parke, the new British champion, at first sight was understandable and his 10-8, 7-9, 9-3, 9-4 loss to the world No 1, Peter Nicol, was no disgrace. But the selection of Del Harris

and Chris Walker, who have both had serious injury problems recently, rather than the in-form Mark Challenger and Dan Jenson, was questionable.

The rustiness of Harris, after months out of the game with a wrist fracture, was exposed by Paul Johnson in a 9-4, 9-4, 9-4 defeat in just 31 minutes. Walker, in his first match since sustaining severe ligament damage in the world doubles championship in December, lost 10-8, 3-9, 9-3, 9-6.

Dunraven Maesteg, however, were rewarded for sticking with their star players. Alex Gough, Mark Cairns and David Evans, virtually a permanent line-up in the first half of the season, beat UNET Surbiton comfortably to record their side's fifth victory in five fixtures and leave the Welsh team 12 points clear of Lingsfield at the top.

Rowlands Manchester moved into third place, five points behind Lingsfield, with Derek Ryan, the new European champion of champions, leading Nick Taylor and Phil Whitlock to a 3-0 win over Halifax Insurance at The Northern Club.

RESULTS, page 45

FIXTURES

FOOTBALL

AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION: First division, Norwich v West Ham (7.30). FAI HARP LAGER NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier division, Sharncliffe v Kidderley (7.45). SNOOKER: Insurance Midland Combination: Premier division, Sturley v BTL v GPT (overnight) (7.30). OTHER MATCH: Southampton v Sheffield Wednesday (7.30).

OTHER SPORT

BASKETBALL: Unibet Trophy: Semi-final, second leg, London Laytons v Sheffield Sharks (7.30). SNOOKER: Scottish Open (in Aberdeen).

TELEVISION CHOICE

Supermarket stories

Superstore
BBC2, 9.00pm

Jill Nicholls, whose previous series chronicled the takeover of Rover, now follows a year in the life of a Tesco supermarket. We are at Banbury in Oxfordshire where the Tesco covers 46,000 square feet, has 29 checkouts and is among its company's top 25 stores. In the current fashion of television documentary Nicholls presents her project as a soap opera, with resident characters and running stories. We are soon on tenterhooks to discover whether Paul Murphy, the customer service manager, is meeting his targets on cutting checkout queues, and whether the truculent young Lucas Gunn can overcome his Jack-the-lad image and earn promotion. Lord MacLaurin of Knebworth, the Tesco chairman, is paying Banbury a visit, and the store faces competition from a new rival about to move into the area.

Mosley
Channel 4, 9.00pm

Laurence Marks and Maurice Gran, more usually associated with sitcoms such as *Birds of a Feather*, are the authors of this four-part study of the leader of the British Blackshirts. For those who think of Sir Oswald Mosley only as a would-be Hitler he may come as a surprise to learn that his early career was anything but fascist. Episode one opens on Armistice Day in 1918 and follows the young Mosley into Parliament, where he expounds a radical programme for modernising Britain and denounces the Black and Tan atrocities in Ireland. He is also portrayed as a compulsive seducer of women, preferably titled ones, an activity which does not cause him any problems, that there must surely be another series. The script has been written with wonderful finesse. Take "That woman had obscene phone callers hanging up on her" as a

Roger Roger
BBC1, 9.00pm

And so farewell to Cresta Cabs but John Sullivan's writing has been so good, even excelling his *Only Fools and Horses* on occasions, that there must surely be another series. The script has been written with wonderful finesse. Take "That woman had obscene phone callers hanging up on her" as a



Jonathan Cake as Mosley (CA, 9.00pm)

verdict on the formidable Marilyn. Or how about "All the theories in the world aren't going to get your brake pads changed." This has been a bold project, more comedy drama than sitcom, dispensing with studio laughter and stretching each episode over 50, instead of the usual 30 minutes. And it has tackled sensitive themes: murder and suicide earlier in the series is now added Alzheimer's disease. Sullivan is not as good as he seems to be. Rather, he uses it to do what he does so well, to illuminate character.

The Search for the Holy Grail
BBC2, 9.30pm

"This programme," declares Ian McShane's voice-over, "sets out to solve the mystery of the Holy Grail." As the Grail is more a concept than a provable fact, and has variously been incarnated in a plate, a stone, a cauldron and, most famously, the chalice from which Jesus took wine at the Last Supper, this sounds like a hopeless chimera. And so it proves but not before the film has worked its way back through time and traced manifestations of the Grail in the art and poetry of Victorian England, the music of Richard Wagner and the knights of medieval Europe. The idea that the Grail has a Christian provenance is challenged by evidence of the concept in the culture of Ancient Rome and pagan Ireland. The journey is illuminating and thoroughly worth making but do not expect it to have an unequivocal destination. Peter Barnard

RADIO CHOICE

First Generation
Radio 4, 8.45pm

The start of a series about growing up as the children of immigrants. Each programme contains only the voice of the subject, in tonight's case, Michael Polak, whose parents came to Britain from Ukraine. Michael, born in Reading, is now 43 and vividly recalls a childhood growing up with a generation of children who had little previous contact with "foreigners". Some of his recollections, such as the embarrassment of having his father take him across a playground using the Ukrainian pronunciation of his name, will strike a chord with any child who has yearned to fit in. His journey to Rome, aged 11, having been nominated by the Ukrainian community to train as a priest, is a remarkable and moving episode.

RADIO 1

6.30am Kevin Greening and Zeb Bell 8.00 Simon Mayo 12.00 Jo Whitey. Includes 12.30pm Newsbeat 2.00 Mark Radcliffe 4.00 Chris Wren. Includes 5.45 Newsbeat 5.50 Evening Session 6.30 Live Music Update 8.40 John Peel 10.30 Mary Ann Hobbs 1.00am Charlie Jordan 4.00 Chris Moyles

RADIO 2

6.00am Sarah Kennedy 7.30 Wake Up to Wogan 9.30 Alan Lester 11.30 Army Young 1.30pm Debbie Thorne 3.00 Ed Stewart 5.00 Johnnie Walker 7.00 Hello Dolly: The Daily Patrol 8.00 Paul Jones 8.30 The Deane Williams Show 9.30 Live 40: New Date Please 10.30pm The Radio 2 Show 11.30pm Nigel Atkinson 12.00am Steve Macken 5.00am John Peel

RADIO 5 LIVE

6.00am The Breakfast Programme 8.00 Nicky Campbell 12.00 Midday 1.30pm The Radio 5 Live Show 2.00pm The Radio 5 Live Show 3.00pm The Radio 5 Live Show 4.00pm The Radio 5 Live Show 5.00pm The Radio 5 Live Show 6.00pm The Radio 5 Live Show 7.00pm The Radio 5 Live Show 8.00pm The Radio 5 Live Show 9.00pm The Radio 5 Live Show 10.00pm The Radio 5 Live Show 11.00pm The Radio 5 Live Show 12.00am The Radio 5 Live Show

VIRGIN RADIO

6.00am Jeremy Clark 7.00 The Chris Evans Breakfast Show 9.00am Russ Wilson. 1.00pm Rick Astley 4.00 Rick Banks 7.00am Paul Coyne 1.00pm Ray Cooney 10.00 Mark Forster 2.00am Richard Forster

TALK RADIO

6.00am Kirsty Young with Bill Overton 8.00 Scott Chisholm 12.00am Kirsty Young 1.00pm Penny Boyd 4.00 Peter Dinklage 7.00am Alan Russett 8.00am James White 1.00pm Ian Collins 5.00 The Early Show

RADIO 3

6.00am On Air, with Andrew McGregor, including Bach (Mass in B minor, BWV222, Kyrie), Poulenc (Trois Mouvements Perpetuels), Debussy (Love Song), Liszt (Liebes Treue), Wagner (The Merry Widow), Tippett (Fantasia Concertante on a Theme of Corelli) 9.00am Masterworks, with Peter Hobbay. Haydn (Violin Concerto in G, Shropshire Madrigal), Gungl (Violin Concerto), Smetana (Smetana in A, K.330), Liszt (Piano Concerto in G, D.555), Wagner (Parsifal, Act 1, Scene 1), Liszt (Piano Concerto in G, D.555), Wagner (Parsifal, Act 1, Scene 1) 10.30am The World of Music, with David Mace. Includes 11.00am Sound Stories, with Donald Macleod 12.00am Composer of the Week: Chopin 1.00pm Liszt's Violin Concerto in G, Shropshire Madrigal, Gungl (Violin Concerto), Smetana (Smetana in A, K.330), Liszt (Piano Concerto in G, D.555), Wagner (Parsifal, Act 1, Scene 1) 2.00pm The BBC Orchestra. BBC Philharmonic under Yehudi Menuhin with Anne Casades, piano. Vaughan Williams (Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis), Stravinsky (Suite for Violin and Piano), Liszt (Piano Concerto in G, D.555), Wagner (Parsifal, Act 1, Scene 1) 4.00pm Ensemble, Caroline Palmer, piano. Bach (French Suite No 2 in C minor, BWV813; No 4 in E flat, BWV815). Plus excerpts from book 2 of Debussy's Preludes (7) 4.45pm Music Mosaic, with Tommy Pearson 5.00pm In Tune. Sean Rafferty is joined by the soprano Amanda Coombes, who is touring the country with the London Mozart Players. Music includes works by Geminelli and Mozart, plus a performance of Haydn's Trumpet Concerto in E flat

RADIO 4

5.30am (LW) Shipping Forecast 6.00am News Briefing 6.10am Farringley 6.25pm Prayer for the Day 7.00am Today 8.40am Yesterday in Parliament 8.55am Weather 9.00am News 9.05am The Pledge. John Walsby and his team of investigators follow up letters 9.30am The World of Music. Tim Whitham continues his journey around the Capitan Sea (34) (7) 10.00am (FM) News. Coast, by Julie Wilkinson. With Duncan Brown, Tim Whitham and Sue Poyser. See Choice 10.00am (LW) News. The Daily Service 10.15 (LW) Old Times. With Michael Rosen 10.30pm Women's Hour. Introduced by Janet Murray 11.30pm From Our Own Correspondent. Dispatches from BBC reporters around the world 12.00am News. You and Yours, with Nick Whitaker 12.25pm Globalwarming. The latest news, chaired by Gordon Corrie. With Kate Adlam, Mark Haskett, Dan Birtwell and Henry Higgs 1.00am Weather 1.00am The World of Music. With Tim Whitham 1.40am The Archers 1.55pm Shipping Forecast 2.00pm News. Theatrical Afternoon. Pantomime. With Michael Rosen, 1.00pm News. The Daily Service 3.00pm News. Afternoon. 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PC, in a sense, who is anything but plodding

You might call it dullish, maybe even cartoonish. But with its exotic, sunny scenery, its starchy linen costumes, and its episodic evocation of the black-belt Brits who roamed Kenya's Happy Valley of the 1930s, it would be a mistake to describe *Heat Of The Sun* as merely a lark. There's no job about it. The series has been full-blown, um, lav.

Of course it was all tosh from start to finish. But it was mostly harmless, watchable tosh. You could find better ways to spend two hours on a Wednesday evening. But you could also find a few worse. Not millions, but certainly a few, including watching Olympic curling. (The sport that combines healthy outdoor exercise with the opportunity to look like a complete idiot).

But just as *Looking After Jo* pivoted on the presence of Robert Carlyle, *Heat Of The Sun* relied on the charismatic Trevor Eve to

give it bite. The scripts themselves seemed formulated for people unable to manage solid food.

Take last night's tale, Russell Lewis's *The Sport Of Kings*. It spun on the murderous activities of a rich, racehorse-owning called Max Van der Vaurt — played by Joe Ackland, who looks even more majestic on screen now that his statuesque head resembles a human-Elisabeth Frink sculpture.

Like its two predecessors, *The Sport Of Kings* was the sort of script a writer might deliver under exact conditions, when he hasn't got quite as much time as he might like to tie up all the plot loose ends. There are familiar dramatic shortcuts: some energetic leaps over hard-to-explain coincidences; lush locations to divert the eye; sketches of heat-and-serve dialogue; and regular doses of love interest, which are injected into the script at regular intervals, like doses of prescription medicine.

The plot? Well, it moves along in mostly predictable ways until the final few minutes, when it leaps like a rudely awoken frog to an unsuspected solution. In a Poirot-style summing-up of the evidence, Trevor Eve — who plays the colony's newly arrived Superintendent Tyburn, a man politically correct 60 years before the concept was invented — exposes the murderer. Whodunnit? Usually the one person you hadn't suspected: this trick is high on surprise, but low on satisfaction for armchair-detectives in the audience.

As you can imagine with this approach, Tyburn, some time finds he lacks all the evidence he would need to tie up the loose ends or to secure a conviction in a court. The scriptwriters have stumbled on a novel way of handling this headache: they always contrive to have the newly exposed culprit shot in the

REVIEW

Joe Joseph

final scene by someone he has wronged. Call it jungle justice. Or as last night, when Ackland gets shot in the chest, a very dramatic turn for the Vaurt.

But Supt Tyburn and his Happy Valley cronies have the glossy look of a cast we will be meeting again in the near future. No doubt new scripts are already tumbling off the production line. Maybe something along the lines of: Wuffie

comes home from Tuppy's party to find his wife, Fluffy, in bed with Chico de Ville. "But Chico's gay," squeals Wuffie. "Not any more!" says Fluffy. "I'm warning you, Wuffie," hisses Supt Tyburn, disgusted at Wuffie's intolerance, "there'll be laws against discriminating against homosexuals in 60 years' time!" Wuffie marches off to get his gun.

Returning home from Tuppy's, Miss Fitzgerald hears rustling in the bushes. Could it be Bunney? She rushes indoors to fetch her gun.

Back at the party, Tyburn asks Tuppy if he is paying his servants the national minimum wage and quizzes the guests as to why blacks in Kenya don't yet have the vote. Binky stutters: "Steady on, dear boy, we're still in the 1930s!"

On his way home, Tyburn spots Asst Supt Valentine, who has just learnt the results of his Detective's Correspondence Course: he didn't pass. "You didn't fail," Tyburn

consoles him. "You were simply Not Grade Appropriate."

The following day Binky's body is found by the raccourse, his pockets full of cocaine. He's been dead for 12 hours, says Dr Mueller. "It all fits perfectly," says Tyburn, as he leaves to arrest — ooh, let's say — Chico for Binky's murder. But Florrie, who loves Chico and is jealous of Fluffy, beats Tyburn to Chico's house. A shot is fired. Chico is dead. "At least Chico wasn't black," Tyburn tells himself. "The blacks suffer enough in Nairobi as it is."

Not to be outdone, BBC has also been perfecting the art of the surprise twist-in-the-tail. This four-part series ended last night with the story of Jose, a frumpy 60-year-old dominatrix who has solved her charlady problems by getting grown men to Hoover her flat and then pay for the privilege. All she

has to do is whip them in return.

As with her three predecessors — Talia, Frank and Tracie — Jose provided us with a checklist of tell-tale clues that led her to prostitution: love-starved and often brutal childhood; resulting low self-esteem; contempt for clients; rebuilding of self-worth through financial stability offered by prostitution and by feelings of being in control.

And then, having handed us all the evidence, came the surprise twist-in-the-tail, just as jarring as any we saw in *Heat Of The Sun*. The surprise is — *tantamount* — that the BBC thought it was telling us anything new about prostitutes.

The only real surprise is that Jose can make a living. She looks as sexually arousing as cottage cheese, and so bored that she probably tells her clients that if they ever get fresh with her — and she finds out about it — she'll be very cross indeed. Maybe that's what gets the old boys so excited.

- BBC1**
- 6.00am Business Breakfast (93000)
 - 7.00am BBC Breakfast News (75800)
 - 9.00am All Over the Shop (950620)
 - 9.25am Change That In Devices (950804)
 - 9.50am Kilroy (752541)
 - 10.30am Carat Cook, West Coast (752530)
 - 10.55am The Really Useful Show (753147)
 - 11.35am What Would You Do? (311057)
 - 12.00pm News (753147)
 - 12.05pm Call My Bluff (753147)
 - 12.35pm Going for a Song (950167)
 - 1.00pm News (753147)
 - 1.30pm Regional News (753147)
 - 1.40pm The Weather Show (753147)
 - 1.45pm News (753147)
 - 2.10pm Petrol (753147)
 - 3.00pm Who's Do the Pudding? (753147)
 - 3.30pm Playdays (446737) 3.50pm The Littlest Pet Shop (570454) 4.00pm McEwan and McEwan (570454) 4.30pm Julia Jekyll and Harriet Jekyll (330212) 4.35pm The Mask (573812) 5.00pm News (753147) 5.10pm Grange Hill (753147) 5.30pm News (753147) 5.40pm News (753147) 5.50pm Regional News (753147) 6.00pm News (753147) 6.30pm Regional News (753147) 7.00pm What's on with Anne Robinson Consumer Investigations (753147) 7.30pm EastEnders: Noise from new rowdies sets giant at odds with a new rowdy (753147) 8.00pm Vets in Practice: Keith Leonard has veterinary school exams; older brother Steve's training teaches him that a veterinarian could be the director of a call. Joe considers a job offer that would mean moving away from girlfriend Emma (753147) 8.30pm The Detective: An escaped grizzly bear is rumored to be roaming Hackney Marshes, and the dubious honour of catching it falls to hapless crime-bustlers Briggs and Lobs. With Peter Cawthorne, Robert Powell (753147) 9.00pm News (753147) 9.30pm Roger Rogers: The Day the World Died: Phil pulls a few strings for showbiz agent Tary to secure a date with his rock 'n' roll destiny. Last in series (753147) 10.20pm The Best Show in the World... Probably: Samantha Janus joins stand-up comedian Dominic Holland and team, captains Alan Davies and Fred MacAulay for the advertising comedy quiz (753147) 10.55pm Question Time: Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, Angela Browning, Conservative spokeswoman on education, historian Andrew Roberts and broadcaster Trevor Phillips answer topical questions posed by an audience in London (753147) 11.50pm Weather (707225) 11.55pm Olympic Grandstand includes 12.00pm Curling: A chance to see the British European championships. 12.00pm Curling: The match, super giant slalom (4667709) 3.00pm BBC News 24
- VideoPlus+ and the Video PlusCode**
- The numbers next to each TV programme listing are VideoPlus+ numbers which allow you to programme your video recorder instantly with a VideoPlus+ handset. Tap in the Video PlusCode for the programme you wish to record. VideoPlus+ is a VideoPlus+ and Video PlusCode are trademarks of Gemstar Development Ltd.

- BBC2**
- 6.10am Insect Diversity (570247) 6.35pm Molluscs, Mechanisms and Minds (3934831) 7.00pm Sea: Hear: Breakfast News (753147) 7.15pm Blue Peter (753147) 7.45pm Olympic Grandstand: Curling, speed skating, ice hockey and skiing (598270) 8.45pm The Record (846102) 9.10pm Hello and Berlin (545744) 9.25pm Megamaths (555814) 9.45pm Come Outside (724550) 10.00pm Teletubbies (753147) 10.30pm Skyline (304812) 10.45pm Teaching Today (803454) 11.15pm Zig Zag (753147) 11.35pm English File (753147) 11.55pm Utschool (312176) 12.20pm Showcase (837725) 12.30pm Olympic Grandstand includes 12.35pm Figure skating: the men's short programme 1.30pm Women's ice hockey 1.50pm Snowboarders: Final of the women's halfpipe event 2.10pm Curling: Great Britain v Germany (857457) 2.40pm News (753147) 2.45pm Westminster (753147) 3.25pm News (753147) 3.30pm The Village (753147) 4.00pm Real Rooms (753147) 4.25pm Ready, Steady, Cook (574205) 4.55pm Easter, Me-sport youth (830182) 5.30pm Today's Day (929) 6.00pm Star Trek: Deep Space Nine (753147) 6.45pm News (753147) 7.00pm Olympic Grandstand: Highlights from Nagano (34305) 8.30pm Jeremy Clarkson's Extreme Machines: Sweden's stealth warship, V8-powered swamp-buggy, a Whizzer mechanical wheelchair and a super-jet. Last in series (753147) 9.00pm The Truth About Women... and Success: Jane Horrocks, Pam St Clement, Anne Robinson and Vanessa Feltz discuss why British men are scared of successful women and whether 1990s women can have it all (753147) 10.00pm News (753147) 10.30pm Regional News and weather (518015) 10.40pm Wales: Departures (753147) 10.45pm Secrets of the Moor: Chris Chapman explores the Mendips Hills (753147) 11.10pm The West This Week (94270) 11.40pm Wales: Subwatch (753147) 11.40pm Swift Justice (753147) 12.10pm Wales: Tales from the Crypt: The Switch (534704) 12.35pm The Jerry Springer Show (753147) 1.30pm News (753147) 1.35pm News (753147) 1.40pm News (753147) 1.45pm News (753147) 1.50pm News (753147) 1.55pm News (753147) 2.00pm News (753147) 2.05pm News (753147) 2.10pm News (753147) 2.15pm News (753147) 2.20pm News (753147) 2.25pm News (753147) 2.30pm News (753147) 2.35pm News (753147) 2.40pm News (753147) 2.45pm News (753147) 2.50pm News (753147) 2.55pm News (753147) 3.00pm 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SAILING 42

EF Language dictates the pace in the Southern Ocean

SPORT

CRICKET 46

Ambrose leads the pack again on happy hunting ground



England B captain impresses

Merson enters the picture for World Cup

By Matt Dickinson

FROM anyone else, it would have sounded like football-speak at its worst. But when Paul Merson, of Middlesbrough, cited captaining the England B team this week as the most fulfilling moment of his career, he meant it and we believed it.

Three years ago Merson, now 29, a gambling, drug-taking alcoholic, doubted he would kick a football again. After drinking in too many saloons, his career had reached the one with last chance on the door.

On Tuesday, his exuberant performance at The Hawthorns was the sole mitigating factor in an otherwise sterile 2-1 defeat by Chile's reserves. His attitude, as well as his performance, cannot fail to have impressed Glenn Hoddle and the World Cup in France is suddenly a realistic goal.

"After what happened, I'm lucky just to be still playing football, let alone leading my country out," Merson said. "It is the biggest honour of my career, even more than all the trophies I have won. Just to be able to feel proud of myself

and have my parents feel proud of me is everything that I have ever wanted."

The former Arsenal forward has 15 caps to his name. He is realistic enough to know that with Paul Scholes and Teddy Sheringham ahead of him for places in the senior squad the sixteenth may never come. But he has every reason to hope.

"It is no good jumping up and down, thinking that the manager will pick me on the back of one performance," he said. "I know I am still on the fringe. But I would have to think that I let myself down by not giving everything at every opportunity."

"If it comes down to the fact that I have done everything in my power and I still don't go to the World Cup, that's fine. I will get on with my life knowing I've done my best. One thing is for sure — it was better to play against Chile B than sit in the stand at Wembley."

Jürgen Klinsmann resumed training with Tottenham Hotspur yesterday, just a week after his jaw was frac-

tured in the FA Cup defeat at Barnsley, and could be back as early as the game against Sheffield Wednesday on February 21.

Stephen Hughes, the Arsenal midfielder, has agreed a new five-year contract after stalling on the deal because he feared he might not be given enough first-team opportunities.

Arsenal have also agreed one-year contracts with defenders Steve Bould and Nigel Winterburn and taken up the option to extend Lee Dixon's contract by 12 months to the summer of 1999.

Brian Little, the Aston Villa manager, is close to resolving half of his Serbian problem after agreeing a fee of £1.5 million with Crystal Palace for Sasa Curcic, the midfielder, who last appeared in the first team four months ago.

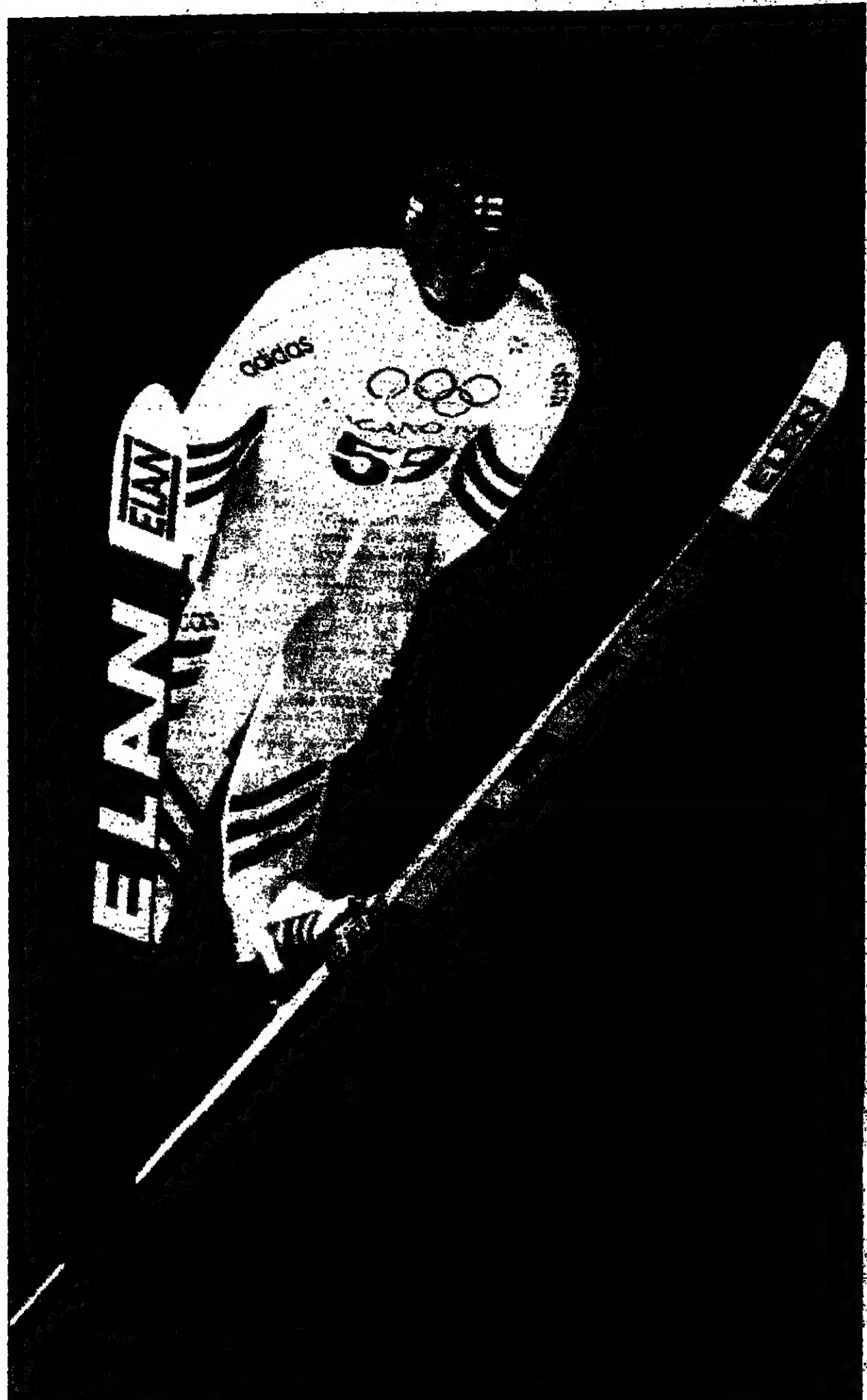
Curcic has still to agree personal terms with Palace, but is anxious for regular football to press his claims for a place in Yugoslavia's World Cup squad.

The equally troubled career of Savo Milosevic, Curcic's Yugoslav colleague, will reach its next crossroads at the weekend. If the transfer-listed Milosevic refuses to act as a substitute in the FA Cup game against Coventry City, then Villa are likely to stop his wages.

However, Milosevic, who is still training with the first team, says he did not refuse to play against Derby County last weekend, only that he was not prepared to be a substitute. With Dwight Yorke continuing to receive treatment for calf injury, Little may be able to appease Milosevic with a starting berth.

Hull City's owner David Lloyd, after putting £4 million into the club, has now warned supporters to expect belt-tightening measures.

"Half of my wealth, after tax, has been spent on Hull," Lloyd said. "I have taken a punt. I have spent £4 million. That's a loss. I can't get it back."



Jani Soininen, of Finland, soars through the air as he makes his first-round jump in the 90-metre event of the ski jumping competition at the Winter Olympic Games yesterday. Soininen went on to win the gold medal.

Marijuana offence is soft target for IOC

FROM ROS HUGHES IN NAGANO

THE first doping issue to hit the Winter Olympic Games here is dead in the water. By lunchtime today, the apparent scandal of a Canadian snowboarder, Ross Rebagliati, being stripped of his gold medal because traces of marijuana were found in his system, will be compromised and swept under the substantial International Olympic Committee (IOC) carpet.

Rebagliati was the first snowboard competitor in history to win a gold medal, when urine samples revealed traces of marijuana in his system, the IOC voted narrowly to ask him to return the gold medal. The split within the IOC, the Canadian lawyer who is high on the Olympic executive and, potentially, the next president, to back his Canadian Olympic Association, which has already declared the punishment too severe.

They favour a reprimand for Rebagliati, who claims that he last took marijuana in April 1997, although he spends "a significant amount

of time" in the company of users, including a farewell party for him en route for Nagano.

The IOC had thus found a convenient target, and some might say, obvious one. The snowboarder, coming in to the Olympic movement like a meteoric comet, had actually frustrated the IOC as "media controllers". Do that to Justin Antonio Samanich, the sportsman's president and his committee, and you will not lightly escape their wrath.

The drug that Rebagliati, from Whistler near Vancouver, allegedly took is not performance enhancing. Meanwhile, the financial giants of the National Hockey League barely conceal that they will stop taking, for the duration of the Games, Sudafed, an amphetamine which heightens aggression and performance and which they buy over the counter at home.

Rebagliati is no Ben Johnson. The IOC, supposedly serious about drug abuse, has picked a lame target and no one believes it could substantiate a case in court.

McLeish takes vacant position at Hibernian

HIBERNIAN yesterday appointed Alex McLeish as their new manager and have agreed to pay compensation to Motherwell, with whom McLeish had signed a new contract only recently.

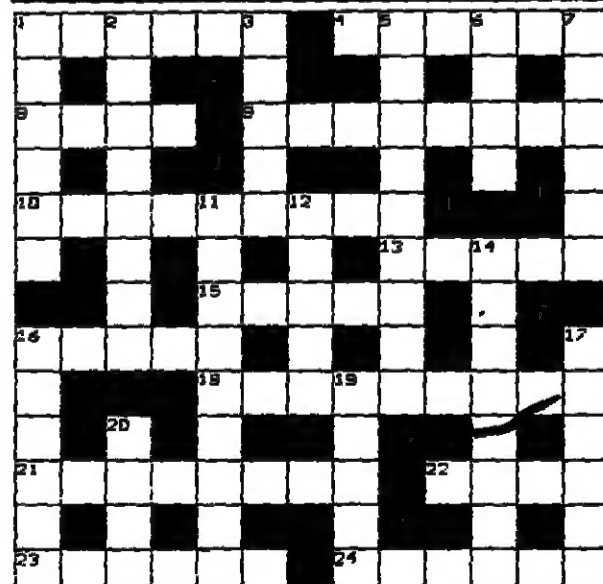
McLeish, who is swapping one relegation battle for another, has signed for 3½ years with Hibernian and replaces Jim Duffy, who lost the job two weeks ago. "I feel there is a potential giant here," McLeish said. "If I can turn this club around, which

I'm confident I can do, that would be a real ambition."

McLeish, 39, who had been at Motherwell since 1994, had a clause in his contract allowing him to talk to any club interested in him.

Alan Dick, the Motherwell secretary, said: "Alex signed a new contract only recently and we expected him to honour it but these things happen. We are very sorry he is leaving and he goes with our best wishes. He did a very good job."

TWO CROSSWORD



No 1327

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| ACROSS | DOWN |
| 1 Dispatch sudden bang (6) | 1 Place of safety (6) |
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| 9 Magnifying tube (9) | 9 One living for pleasure (8) |
| 10 Appreciation of one deceased (8) | 10 Godly, prayerful (6) |
| 11 Side of pitch: wound (game bird) (4) | 11 Radioactivity counter inventor (6) |
| 12 Prize: victory memorial (6) | 12 Country Exodus was out of (5) |
| 13 Formidable adversary: deposit on teeth (6) | 13 Open-air pool (4) |

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